THE

THEATRICAL RECORDER:

BY

THOMAS HOLCROFT.

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PHILIP THE SECOND:

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS,

TRANSLATED FROM

THE ITALIAN OF ALFIERI,

By FANNY HOLCROFT.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PHILIP II.

CARLOS, his Son.

PEREZ, the Friend of CARLOS.

GOMEZ, the King's Favourite.

LEONARDO, an Inquisitor.

ISABELLA, the Wife of PHILIP.

Counsellors. Guards.

SCENE—The Regal Palace.

PHILIP THE SECOND:

A TRAGEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Isabella.

Isabella.

ANXIOUS fears, restless wishes, impious hopes,
Avaunt!—What I, the wife of Philip, break my vow!
What I love Philip's son!—Oh God!—Yet who
Could see the prince, and not admire? Sublime
Of mind, humane of heart, in genius rich!
A heavenly form enshrines a spotless soul!
Ah, why did nature stamp thee so divine?
But what are thoughts like these? Is't thus I seek
To chase his gentle image from my breast?
Oh, were the fatal secret to escape!—
'Tis true that sadness blights my faded cheek,
And, when we meet, he sees the swelling tear
With pain restrain'd. But sees he not I fly?
And knows he not that smiles and festive joy
Are crimes denounc'd in Spain's fanatic realm?
Who can unveil my heart? Oh that I could
Myself enjoy the ignorance of others!
That memory were lost! Thought buried in
Eternal night! Oh wretched Isabel!
Thy tears alone can sooth the horror of
Thy fate; which tears, alas, are blackest stains
Of guilt.—I'll seek some lone recess, and there
Indulge a while my grief—Just Heav'n!—The prince?
Alas!—I'll fly—In ev'ry word and look,
My heart might speak.

SCENE II.—*Enter* Carlos.

Carl. (*aside*) Oh Isabel!—What, lady,
Do *you* avoid my sight? Do *you* frown on
My woe?

Isab. Prince—
Carl. In my father's court, I know
That enmity and hate have mark'd me base:
O'erlook'd and poor in royal Philip's love,
I marvel not to read contempt half hid,
And rancour ill conceal'd, in ev'ry eye.
But you were of a softer mould; a clime
Far milder gave you birth; for bigot rage
Had not possess'd your soul, nor vile deceit.
Who could suppose that, in a form so fair,
So full of winning grace, there beat a heart
Estrang'd to sympathy!
Isab. You know the life
I lead in these abodes: the new and strict
Decorums, of this gloomy court, have not
Yet stifl'd, in my soul, the dear innate
Affection, which we bear our native soil.
That you're unhappy, prince, and that your wrongs
Are great, no less I grieve: what can I more?
Carl. For me?
Oh joy! Now ev'ry care is flown! Nor have your woes
Less strong been felt; how oft have I suppress'd
The torments of my soul to mourn your fate,
And wished——
Isab. Time yet may sooth its rigour, prince;
My sorrows bear no poise to *yours*: restrain
Your pity.
Carl. Does compassion then in *me* offend,
While *yours* revives my sinking heart?
Isab. You set
Too high a price——
Carl. Oh no! What virtue can exceed
That trembling sense of human woe which thrills
In ev'ry noble breast! which fortune's frowns,
Or smiles, can ne'er destroy? Oh, matchless gem,
Which leaves not him a wretch, whose griefs are sooth'd
By tears of sympathy!
Isab. Carlos, this bosom too
Can thrill! These eyes o'erflow!—Alas!—Think not
Cold apathy benumbs my soul! These lips
Should plead your innocence, if my weak voice
Could reach a Sire too angry to be just.
Carl. Who dares to plead for *me?* And if you would,
The task should not be yours. Oh, cruel fate!
From you alone my woes arise; from you,
My only friend, yet you can not console!
Isab. From *me* your woes arise? From *me?*
Carl. You know
It well. The fatal day on which, betroth'd,
They tore you from my arms brought endless woe.

Isab. Our hopes, like transient sunbeams on a wintry noon,
Were soon eclips'd by clouds, portending tempest.
Carl. From infancy I lov'd; you were my all;
'Twas Philip bade me love; yet dar'd to break
The ties which, in the face of Heav'n, he made!
Isab. And you?
Carl. A subject and a son, I wept,
In silence, woes I could not heal. My soul
Repin'd: I hush'd its just complaints: I still
Rever'd the hand that gave the mortal wound. The king
Became your lord! what tongue can tell the pangs
Suppress'd, the stifl'd rage, that rent my heart?
Of conscious virtue proud, for more it was
Than human fortitude. I bore my wrongs,
And rein'd my sorrows, so that never once
I stray'd from honor's path. Yes, God, who reads
The naked heart, can vouch that mine was pure.
The languid day, the restless night, were spent
In sighs and tears. Oh, fruitless grief! As my
Affliction grew, my father's *hate* increas'd.
Isab. Prince, hatred blackens not your father's heart.
Vile sycophants, with malice fraught, who feel,
And feeling dread, your worth, with all the rage
Of envy raise distrust in Philip's breast.
Carl. You little know, and may you *never* know,
The king: nor are the crimes of this vile court
Within your sphere. The spotless heart can ill
Conceive, or yield belief to, vice so wanton!
More cruel than the servile herd he rules,
Philip rejects his son: *he* wills each blow,
Which abject envy aims. The father he
Abjures; yet still I feel he is my father.
Ah, should I e'er forget that sacred name,
Cast off respect, and give my wrongs full vent,
I'd not complain of sullied honor, fame
Destroy'd, or of a father's most unnatural most
Unheard-of hate, but, misery to think,
But of a stab still more implacable!
Of you—of you he robb'd me!
Isab. Prince, a son——
Carl. Forgive the ravings of a tortur'd mind.
How long my griefs have canker'd in my breast!
To you, alone——
Isab. You must not tell, nor must
I hear——
Carl. Oh, lady, you *have* heard in part:
Why then refuse the rest? Th' impassion'd heart
Will find a tongue, or break.
Isab. No more! Be gone!

Carl. Alas!
I must obey: but, ah, how much I yet
Could tell! One last poor hope remains——
Isab. What hope in you
Is not a crime?
Carl. You do not hate?—
Isab. My lord,
If you *presume* to love, I'm *bound* to hate.
Carl. Chastise me then; warn Philip of my love.
Isab. The king?—I dare not e'en pronounce your name.
Carl. So great you deem th' offence?
Isab. Do you *alone*
Offend?
Carl. Oh, Heav'ns! Your heart then shares—
Isab. What can I say?
Too much I've said; too much you have presum'd.
Think I'm your father's wife; respect yourself;
For, while you dare to speak, and I dare hear,
We sanctify revenge.
Carl. If passion rack'd
Your heart like mine, if in anothers arms
My image still pursu'd, how light would seem
Th' offence of seeking to approach and gaze,
Till sense grew wild, on that enchanting face,
To sometimes give a momentary pause
To grief, in pure and chaste effusions of the soul!
Isab. Alas!—Away!—Fly from this fatal realm;
At least, till I'm no more: and soon I feel
Death's welcome hand will strike.
Carl. Do you reflect?
Think you 'tis easy to elude the king's
Distrust? Were I betray'd, my flight would be
A new offence; and, ah, my father seeks too much
To find me criminal. The sole offence
Of which he *might* complain he does not know.
Isab. (*with great passion*) Oh that I knew it not!
Carl. You soon will be aveng'd.
Oh, leave me to my fate! If sorrow find
Me not an early grave, my father will;
For in his savage breast my death is seal'd.
Oh let me dwell still in these dark abodes,
Which borrow light from you! Ah let me breathe
The air you breathe!
Isab. My soul recoils! Alas,
I tremble for your life! To stay is death!
An inward voice forebodes your hapless fate.
You say you love: oh, grant my first, my last,
Request; fly Philip's vengeful ire!
Carl. It cannot be.

Isab. Then carefully avoid my sight: preserve
My fame and yours unblemish'd: let your deeds
Bely the sland'rous tongue of envious rage:
Clear yourself to Philip. Live, I charge you,
But sully not the only gem I wear,
A spotless mind! Oh, leave one craft to save
A sinking wretch! My heart, my soul, my thoughts,
Will all be yours. With fate I cannot war;
But seek me not. This meeting be our last.
Only to Heav'n the fatal myst'ry's known:
Oh let us hide it, prince, from ev'ry eye;
Nay from ourselves; and, if you can, e'en blot
The recollection from your heart!
Carl. What, must we meet
No more? Oh misery! And thus you leave
Me?—Cruel fate! At once thou mak'st me blest
And curst!

SCENE III.—*Enter* PEREZ *in haste.*

Per. You're watch'd, my lord!—But, say? What moves
You thus? You are unlike yourself!—Oh, speak!
This heart will share your sorrows.—How, you're silent!
From infancy, our pains and pleasures have been one:
Did you not call me friend?
Carl. And dar'st thou speak
Of friendship in this court? A word of guile,
In courts corrupt and base, and but usurp'd.
Thy faith avails me not; 'tis ruin to thyself:
Steer not against the tide: kneel with the servile crowd:
Adore the sovereign idol, and exalt
Thy voice in strains of welcome praise;
'Twill serve thee best.
Per. Oh, sink me not so low!
Confound me not with sycophants so base!
I swear—But vows are here a current coin,
Which ev'ry man alloys: each tongue will pledge,
And ev'ry tongue is perjur'd: better proof
This heart, this arm, will give: what peril shall
I brave?—Point out the foe, who most offends?
Carl. 'Tis Philip—Ay, 'tis he! His insolent
Dependants merit not the name. To him
I owe respect; to them contempt.
Per. Prince, Philip is
Deceiv'd; you are traduc'd: the traitors stab
With craft; 'tis they excite the king's unjust
Displeasure. I'll unmask them, and proclaim
The truth——

Carl. What say'st thou, Perez? Philip knows
The truth far better than thou think'st: he hates
It more; nor will he hear a voice in my
Behalf——
Per. The voice of Nature——
Carl. Moves him not:
His heart is pitiless. To innocence and Heav'n,
Who smiles benignant on th' oppress'd, I trust
My cause. Were I with truth accus'd, thou shouldst
Alone for Carlos plead. What greater mark
Of friendship can I give?
Per. Oh, let me share
Your fate, whate'er it be: 'tis all I ask;
What honor else can this vile court bestow?
Carl. But know'st thou Carlos ne'er again shall smile?
That peace and fortune are for ever flown?
Per. I seek not fortune, but to serve my prince.
Ah, if a sep'rate grief prey on your heart,
Our tears, at least, shall flow in sympathy.
Carl. A grief lies here which saps the root of life,
Which yet I cherish: oh, that I could pour it in
Thy soul!—A friend more noble never man
Possess'd, yet I can not requite thy truth
With confidence. Now go: why dost thou still
Persist in love so pure, yet so ungently borne?
My claims are bankrupt; prithee go: dost thou
Forget it is a mortal crime to pledge
Thy faith to him the monarch hates?
Per. And know
You not, the man who keeps that faith, and braves
The monarch's wrath, attains immortal glory?
Your secrecy afflicts, but can not shake, my soul.
A sorrow mines your days, which you can not
Impart?—I'll ask no more: but surely you
Can not refuse to let me share your woes,
And die with you?
Carl. Is such thy wish?—Then take
My hand, the luckless pledge of luckless friendship.
For thee I grieve; but war no more with fate
And Heav'n, who grant me such a friend. Oh, Philip,
Thou art more wretched than the wretch thou mak'st!
Though, rob'd in stately pomp, thou proudly sway'st
Hispania's rich domains, while slaves in myriads kneel,
I view thee not with envy, but compassion;
For sacred friendship never touch'd thy soul. [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Philip, Gomez.

Philip.

WHAT hast thou most at heart?
Gom. Your favour, Sire.
Phil. How think'st thou to retain it?
Gom. By a prompt
Obedience, and an anxious zeal. 'Twas thus
I long have won my sovereign's grace.
Phil. I need
Them both to-day.
Gom. The task is light.
Phil. I know
That, hitherto, thy ardent faith has been
Unmatch'd; but *now* high thoughts revolve within
My soul: I shall perhaps entrust to thee
A charge so consequent, and new, that it
Behoves me to recal *thy duty* briefly
To mind.
Gom. Th' event will justify the trust
Great Philip places, in his faithful slave.
Phil. The task will not be difficult to thee.
Alone my consort comes; thou'lt hear us long
Converse: mark well; note ev'ry look, and change,
And fix on her that searching eye that oft
Has read thy sov'reign's inmost thoughts, and met
His yet unutter'd wish.

SCENE II.—*Enter* Isabella.

Isab. My lord, I wait
Your pleasure.
Phil. Think, lady, 'tis no light cause
For which I call you here.
Isab. My liege? What is't?
Phil. You soon shall know—May I depend on you?——
But wherefore doubt? Where could I seek advice
More just, or more sincere?
Isab. Advice! From me?
Phil. From you. You know your judgment stands the first
In our esteem; and, if you have not shar'd
The cares of state, think not your consort poor
In love, or that your king wants confidence.
I'd spare you toils so irksome to your sex.

But now the day is come in which th' affairs
Of state most nearly touch our royal blood,
And your advice becomes most exigent.
But first, say, which you hold most awful, most rever'd,
A sov'reign's will or father's sacred right?
Isab. They're equally rever'd. Who doubts?
Phil. One who
Perhaps should most have known their force. But tell
Me, queen, ere I unfold my soul—be frank—
Has Carlos—Philip's son—your hatred, or—
Affection?
Isab. Sire!
Phil. I understand! Were you
To listen to your heart, and not high virtue's voice,
The name of *mother* would be wormwood to
Your soul.
Isab. Oh no! you wrong me, Sire. The prince—
Phil. Is dear to you? You, Philip's consort, have
The *virtue* to regard his son with all
A *mother's* love?
Isab. You guide my thoughts; you love,
Or think you love, the prince: no less do I.
Phil. Since your pure heart feels not th' unjust dislike
Step-mothers bear, nor yet a *mother's* blind
And doting tenderness, be you his judge.
Isab. His judge! I!
Phil. Hear me? Long I center'd each
Fond wish in Carlos; till, forsaking noble
Honors' path, he kill'd my dearest hopes! Oh,
How oft paternal love excus'd the wrongs
Of this self-will'd audacious son! But, now,
His rash and daring arrogance spurns all
Control; and stronger measures must, alas,
Be us'd. A new offence is added to
The rest, which all exceeds; to which all words
Are poor; which break all ties of blood! But how?
You tremble, yet unknowing? Listen, and you'll
Shudder. 'Tis five years now, or more, since that
Vile race, who plough the marshy lands that lie
The lowest on the coast, first dar'd to brave
My pow'r. Rebellious to their God and king,
Crime follow'd crime. You know the blood and treasure
This war has vainly cost; and, tho' myself
And empire were to perish in the strife,
The perfidy of those vile slaves shall be chastis'd!
I've sworn to sacrifice the impious race
To violated Heav'n! Who cannot stoop
T' obey must learn to die. Who would believe!
My son, my only son, leagues with my direst foes!

Isab. The prince!
Phil. E'en he! The many papers found,
His secret conf'rences, th' audacious language
He in public holds, all confirm his guilt.
Oh, think how agony must rack the father, and
The monarch, thus betray'd. Say, what does such
A son deserve?
Isab. (*aside*) Oh, wretched Isabel!—
And must I then decide?
Phil. You must: on you
His fate depends. Speak freely, queen; fear not
To wound the father's heart, or irritate the king! Pronounce.
Isab. I only fear to be unjust. In courts
We often see the innocent confounded with
The base. Your son——
Phil. How, lady! Can you doubt
My regal word? Who more can wish to find
Him guiltless? Prove, oh prove, the accusation false!
Isab. Has he acknowledg'd then——?
Phil. What pow'r could force
Him? Obstinate and proud, he not alone
Disdains reply, to certain evidence,
But will not urge the shadow of excuse.
I would not, in th' intemp'rate heat of passion, charge
Him with this last offence; but, tho' the burst
Of indignation was suppress'd, the cooler voice
Of Justice must be heard.—Oh God!—Still! Still
I feel I have a father's heart!
Isab. Oh, give
Those feelings vent, the noblest man can boast!
I'll pledge my life, he yet is innocent. Oh, Sire,
You'll find you are deceiv'd! He cannot thus
Have strangely err'd! He is belied! But you
Will hear the prince; for Nature has a syren voice;
To her the eloquence of angels would
Be tame. If haughtily he met reproof,
And spurn'd at censors, oft malignant, you
He will respect. To you his heart will yearn,
And yours will cherish confidence, and love.
The prince is rarely suffer'd to approach
You, Sire; and you more rarely deign to greet
Him with a gentle word: with awe he comes,
With sorrow he retires; this silence, fatal as
Ill-judg'd, creates restraint, and fear, while sweet
Affection wanes. If now he rest unfam'd,
Wanting renown, it is for you to rouse
His slumb'ring virtue. He's your son,
And ev'ry noble spark cannot be dead,
Since Philip's blood flows in his veins! Trust not

To ruder hands a charge so dear! Preserve
Your majesty to strangers, but cast off
The king's stern aspect, when your son appears.
What may not gen'rous treatment win, from gen'rous minds?
You think he greatly err'd: And who errs not?
Be yours, alone, the task to reprimand.
A father's wrath is mild, and yet the son
With trembling meets his frown: a word from you,
One kind reproach, will sink more deep into
His noble heart, and kindle more remorse,
Than all th' opprobrium malice can inflict.
Let but your courtiers know the prince is dear
Still to their king, that you esteem his hot
And youthful ardour, worthy high applause
No less than blame, then will you hear each voice
Rais'd to extol. Dismiss suspicions not
Your own: leave kings to brood o'er dreaded treason who
Deserve their fate!

Phil. 'Tis worthy of you, queen!
It well behoves you thus to raise the flame
Of Nature in the father! None but you,
Kind lady, pleads her force! Alas, the monarch is
A scepter'd slave! He not alone must curb
His strongest thoughts, but must not dare to breathe
A sentiment unfetter'd by restraint:
Nay often is oblig'd to tamely feign.
Yet, mark, the moment comes when breaking from
Rude bonds, too long endur'd, he firmly acts.
You have unveil'd the truth more fully than
You think. Ah, since your heart absolves my son,
All doubt is nearly clear'd. Go, call the prince.

[*Exit* Gomez.

SCENE III.—Philip, Isabella.

Phil. You soon shall see I am a father still.
Should much offended majesty be forc'd
To act, more than my son's this heart will grieve.

Isab. He comes, permit me to retire.

Phil. Not so:
Remain.

Isab. With freedom I have spoken as
You bade: Why should I stay? Step-mothers are
Unwelcome mediators, and my presence here
Is now not wanted.

Phil. You're much deceiv'd; 'tis
Most necessary, queen. Step-mother is
With you *a name*, and e'en the name you may
Ere long forget. Your sight will glad the prince.

He comes; nor shall the champion of his fame,
And *purity of heart*, evade his thanks.

SCENE IV.—*Enter* CARLOS *and* GOMEZ.

Phil. Approach, Don Carlos—say, when shall I call
You by the tender name of son? My brow
Is stern: alas, the fault is yours: cold rigid forms
Replace a father's love; but should you hate
Your Sire, why fear you not your Lord?
Carl. My Liege,
Tho' accusation oft has reach'd my ear,
I know not yet th' offence with which I'm charg'd.
In silence I have borne my griefs; for, if
You think me guilty, doubtless, I have err'd.
'Tis true, my heart feels not remorse, or guilt,
But deepest anguish, that you should suppose
Me base! Oh, that I knew in what my woes,
Or say my faults, originate!
Phil. You love
Your country little, and your Sire still less;
And lend too quick an ear to artful flatt'rers:
From thence arise your faults.
Carl. I joy to think
You do not charge me with a wayward spirit.
The past may be retriev'd: I yet may learn
What tribute of regard my country claims.
To chase those sycophants who dare deceive
You, and traduce their prince, because their arts
O'erpow'r the voice of truth.
Phil. Rash youth—your thoughts,
Your actions, nay your very looks, proclaim that you
Assume far far beyond your right. This I
Should hold a venial fault; but, as your years
Increase, your sense grows younger still and you
More rash. I'll call th' offence I now deplore
A juvenile transgression; though it bears,
Perhaps, the face of studied mischief.
Carl. Sire!
Transgression!—What transgression?——
Phil. Can you ask?
Know you not, prince, that I have trac'd each step,
Search'd ev'ry thought, and prob'd the most conceal'd?
Acknowledge, queen, his gravest fault is, not
In having err'd, but, in self-will'd denial
Of guilt.
Carl. Of guilt! What have I done?
Phil. Are your
Offences then so many that you know not which

I mean?—Say, have you not a secret league
Where treason fiercely flames? Where lies are forg'd
With impious zeal?—Did you not grant within
These very walls, by stealth, ere break of day,
An audience, long and criminal, to vile
Batavia's envoy? That base wretch, who, if
You yield him faith, comes here our friend, but who
Broods hatred and deceit, in his false heart!

Carl. Oh, father, is each action then of mine
Ascrib'd to guilt? 'Tis true I long convers'd
With the Batavian envoy; and 'tis true
I mourn'd with him his people's fate: nay mourn
It still; nor would you less, perhaps, did you
Know all they have endur'd; for years oppress'd
By rulers, haughty, timid, inexpert,
And absolute, beneath whose iron yoke
They groan. I'll not deny I sorrow for
Their woes; but would you have the son of Philip boast
A vulgar soul, or wear a heart of rock?
Perhaps the hope of rousing your compassion,
By freely giving utt'rance to the truth,
Makes me presume too far: but how can I
Offend my father, in supposing him
Alive to pity's voice? If you are Heav'n's
Vicegerent here on earth, what brings you nearer to
The Deity than sweet compassion? Yet,
If you still think I've err'd, my fate is in
Your hands; but charge me not with treason, I
Conjure you, Sire.

Phil. A noble pride exhales
In ev'ry word—but you cannot embrace,
Nor is't for you to penetrate your king's
Sublime designs. Henceforth, restrain your rash
Impetuous spirit: check that restless wish to force
Advice, unask'd, on us, with daring arrogance;
And learn to not make traffic of your thoughts,
However just. If, on some future day,
The world is to behold you on the throne
Which bears the palm o'er Europe's ample realms,
Learn wariness; then you will be rever'd.
The rashness, prais'd in youth, then would create
Severest blame. 'Tis time methinks to change.
You call on me for pity: pity you
Shall have, but for yourself; all merit not
So much: leave *me* to judge of what is right
And wrong. The queen has long been pleading, nor
In vain, in your behalf: she deems you worthy still
No less of my affection than her love.
You owe your pardon more to her than me—

To her!—I hope you'll learn to estimate
My favour, and deserve it more. You see,
Oh lady, that I yield; and, taught by you,
Not only learn to *pardon* but to love my son.
Isab. My liege——
Phil. The merit's yours and yours alone:
I have repress'd my anger for your sake,
And warn'd him with paternal tenderness.
Oh, may I ne'er repent!—Now, Carlos, mark!
Fulfil her hopes, and prove your gratitude.
You, queen, must see the prince more frequently;
That he from *good* to *better* may advance:
Converse together; give him sage advice. You will,
My son, attend; nor shun her sight—'tis my
Command.
Carl. *Pardon!* 'Tis an ungentle sound.
But since I hear it from my Sire, and since
The queen implor'd, I must submit; but, oh,
I hope that Fate (for Fate it is and not
My guilt) will ne'er degrade me thus again!
Phil. You should not blush at having been forgiv'n,
But to have err'd.—Enough—retire; think well
On what I've said. Return, oh queen, to your
Apartment, I'll be with you soon: I'm call'd
A while to more important cares. [*Exeunt* Queen *and* Prince.
Phil. (*to* Gomez.) Heard'st thou?
Gom. I heard!
Phil. Saw'st thou?
Gom. I saw!
Phil. Oh rage! My doubts—
Gom. Are doubts no more.
Phil. And Philip still lives unreveng'd!
Gom. I think——
Phil. I've thought. Away!* [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—Carlos, Isabella.

Carlos.

OH, queen, excuse this new and daring step.
If at an hour so late, so strange, I sent

* The two copies of this tragedy in our possession have different modes of ending the act. Nothing can well be conceived finer than the above: the other is far inferior.

Faithful Elvira to request a moment's
Audience, 'twas for reasons most important.
Isab. What would you, prince?—Why am I summon'd;
Is not my peace sufficiently destroy'd?
Why are you here?—And why am I?
Carl. Oh, be
Not angry, lady: briefly I will speak, and then
Return, hard fate, to solitude and tears.
This morn, you dar'd to plead in my behalf
To Philip: great was your imprudence! And
Of this I came to warn you. Heaven grant
It's ill effects may fall on me, alone!
Pompous compassion was insidious deceit:
The pardon he bestow'd was pledge of hate
More bitter. Your pure heart suspected not
How galling Pity's breath is to the tyrant's soul.
Now mark it well: forbearance, in the king,
Is the forerunner of each cruel act.
From that dread hour, strange fears have prey'd upon
My soul!—Oh God!—What can it mean? He spoke
Unlike himself: and show'd unusual love!
Oh, never, I conjure you, speak again
To him of me!
Isab. 'Twas he first spoke, and forc'd
Me to reply: but then his wrath seem'd wholly to
Subside: and ere you came, he wept and prais'd
You with a father's warmth. He gave you life;
And can I, prince, believe a father does
Not love his only son? 'Tis passion blinds
You: it imagines hatred which can not
Exist!—You see your father with dislike;
And I, oh misery, create this strife!
Carl. Oh, Isabella, ill you judge us both.
I fear, 'tis true, but do not hate the king:
I envy him the gem he snatch'd from me;
Too rare for such a hand, which throws it by,
Unconscious of its worth. Were you content,
Alas, my sorrows would be less.
Isab. Again
You break into complaints: I'll leave you, prince.
Be calm: I'll study ev'ry word and look,
Should Philip ere renew his last discourse.
I fear him too; but *you* still more I fear. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Carl. Oh, noble heart! Ill vers'd in mean distrust,
Where hast thou fallen?—But who comes here?
What now?

SCENE III.—*Enter* GOMEZ.

Gom. I wait the king: anon he will
Be here.—Permit me, prince, to share the joy
You feel, at being fully now restor'd
To royal Philip's grace: my influence
And pow'r have ever been exerted in
Your favour. Deign t' accept——

[*Exit* Carlos, *who passes* Gomez *with an indignant and contemptuous air.*

SCENE IV.

Gom. Haughty enough!
But, still, more rash.

SCENE V.—PHILIP, LEONARDO, PEREZ, GOMEZ: Counsellors *and* Guards *at a distance.*

[*They all sit.*]

Phil. Ho! Guards! Let none intrude
Upon our privacy. Ye few but faithful friends,
You're call'd upon, in this strange hour and place,
To hear a cause most urgent, and most high.
Attend! (*pause.*) Black horror creeps upon my soul,
Congeals my blood! Turns ev'ry tear to stone!
My feeble voice dies on my trembling lips,
And wavers still, amid contending passions.
And must I speak? Oh, yes! My country wills,
Not I, the cruel task!—Who would believe
I sit in accusation here, a judge?
'Tis past conjecture! Who but I wou'd dare
Accuse so high a criminal?—You shrink!
Aghast you look!—What will you say, when I
Shall name *the prince?*——

Leon. Your only son?

Per. (*with all the warmth of honest indignation*) When did
He e'er transgress?

Phil. More happy than your king,
Domestic peace is yours; of that I'm robb'd,
By my ungrateful son! How vainly have I tried,
With gentle words and mild reproof, to move
This disobedient boy! To pray'r and kind
Advice he shuts his ear; and menace still
More daringly defies. Offence crept on,
Offence, and bold presumption grew; till, at last,
He now has broke all bounds. This very day,

On which I gave no dubious proof of lenity,
Too great, he chose to crown his base exploits
With impious guilt. The glorious sun, bright herald of
My deeds, scarce hence had mov'd t' illume my vast
Domains, and night the traitor's friend had spread
Her sable robe, when horrid thoughts rose in
My son's black mind. Thirsting revenge, because
He had receiv'd the pardon of his guilt,
Silently he mov'd toward my chamber,
The murd'rous weapon naked in his hand.
Close at my heels he slunk; his arm was rais'd
To strike, and soon he would have plung'd the steel
In his defenceless father's side—Aloud
A voice exclaim'd Beware! Philip! Beware!
'Twas Roderic who came; and then I heard
The jarring clang of falling steel. I turn'd
To look, and lo a dagger glisten'd at
My feet! Then, by the glimm'ring light, I saw
My son steal cautiously along the gallery!
My tale is told. If any of you can
Accuse the prince of other crimes, or can
You prove him innocent of this, oh speak!
I conjure you, freely speak! So may Heav'n
Inspire your tongues! A fearful task it is!
Oh, weigh it well, ere you decide! From you
My safety—and my son's, at once I claim.

Gom. What do you ask, oh Sire? Can we betray
Our sov'reign, and ourselves?—Yet, can we pierce
A father's heart? Oh force us not to such
A dread extreme.

Leon. The day may come, oh king,
When you may grieve, and we repent, your having heard
The truth.

Per. Her voice can never harm: the truth
Is ask'd; let truth be heard!

Phil. The father hears
You not; the king attends.

Gom. Then I will first
Begin, first brave the father's wrath; for you
Are still a father, and we read your brow
More agitated than severe: if you arraign
The prince, the son is still absolv'd. You will
Not, haply can not, number all his crimes.
To treat with vile Batavian rebels was
Too petty an offence, to satisfy
Your son. Behold this paper, taken from
The prince, in which he signs our ruin and
His shame. With France he dares negotiate!
With hated France! Navarre, rich Catalon,

And other provinces no less renown'd,
The conquest of our valiant ancestors,
And which with valiant blood we have maintain'd,
Oh shame, he pledg'd: the most detested price
Of most detested aid, lent to a son
Against his Sire! So great a part of these
Domains will fall a prey to the proud Frank;
The rest, unable to resist, will groan beneath
The yoke of this implacant son, that would
Dethrone a king, whose arm and genius not
Alone a part but e'en the whole of this
Vast globe could sway! Such the fate that threats us!
Most necessary, dear, and sacred, are
Your days to us, oh king: but no less sacred is
The glory of Hispania's noble realm.
T' attempt a father's life is horrible
Excess: but to have sold his honor and
His country, suffer me to say, perhaps,
Is e'en as horrible. Philip might that
Forgive: it touches him alone: and this?—
May have the pow'r to overlook—Yet, when
Black crimes like these are prov'd, what sentence dare
These lips pronounce, but that of death?
Per. Death! What
Words are these? Death!
Phil. Oh God!
Leon. Who would believe
That, to the names of *traitor, parricide,*
And *rebel,* I could add one more detested still?
A name that no man dare pronounce!
Phil. What is't?
Leon. Of Heav'n the sacrilegious foe, he scorns
Our holy faith!—Oh God, omnipotent,
Inspire thy vile but faithful servant, and
Unseal his lips, to oracle high truths!
The moment now is come, when, with a nod
Tremendous and almighty, thou'lt destroy
Impiety and pride! On me thou call'st,
Thy violated sanctity to now defend!
Thou warm'st my icy breast with fire divine,
And worthy of thy cause!—Oh king, respect
In me the awful voice of the most High,
And tremble while you hear! The prince (I dare
Not call a wretch so harden'd Philip's son),
The prince, with tongue of fiend, each day blasphemes
The ministers of Heav'n, nay Heav'n itself!
His hell-born heresy dares interrupt
Our holy rites: he scorns our ancient faith,
Applauds the new, and, should he e'er be king,

He'll overthrow our sacred altars, and
With impious foot will trample on whate'er
We honor, now, with incense and our vows.
We shall behold—What is't I say? Though God
Suspend a while th' exterminating sword,
'Twill fall, at last, and sweep him from the earth.
I never shall behold the sacred veil withdrawn,
Which guards from vulgar eye immortal truth,
Beyond the powers of thought, which men no less
Revere: nor that tribunal laid in ruins
Where Heaven's justice is administer'd
To man with tenderness which but corrects
To save, where we untainted keep our faith,
Though Hell and Carlos vow its fall! Oh, Heav'n, avert
The horrid vow! Hell, may'st thou hope in vain!
—Oh, Philip, raise your mind to Heav'n's eternal King,
Life, honor, empire, all he gave and all
He can withdraw! Is he, who braves his pow'r,
A son?—The dire decree is pass'd: for you
It is to sign; delay not, Sire—The hand,
That dares retard th' avenging sword of Heav'n,
Turns on itself the mortal blow.

Per. Bold truths
But rarely spring on slav'ry's soil: nor do
The free of soul as freely always speak:
Yet base submission oft puts on the mask
Of independence. Listen, Sire, and know
What freedom is: from *me* a different language you
Will hear.—This paper, Sire, is forg'd; the crimes,
Alleg'd against the prince, but ill agree.
If he, oh monstrous guilt, prepar'd to aim
His hand against a father's sacred life,
Why treat with rebels? Why demand the aid
Of France? Why barter the paternal realm?
Why rob himself?—For if, by these base means,
He hop'd to lighten his sad destiny,
Why thus attempt this horrid parricide?
Why but attempt? Would he so far have gone
And then shrink back? What obstacle oppos'd?
—If so he did, it was the act of phrenzy, not
Of guilt. He knows that ev'ry eye and ear
Watch for a monarch's safety, e'en when not
Belov'd, because from him all honors, wealth,
And power, flow. You saw him fly?—Oh 'twas
A lying vision, conjur'd up, my lord,
By traitors to your peace! Oh, let him come!
Let him be heard! He'll justify himself.
That he not thirsts your blood I swear: my head,
Nay more, my honor, which is far beyond

The grasp of kings, or priests, I'll stake upon
His innocence. How shall I speak of that
Ferocious pride, which, in the garb of meek
Insulted sanctity, begs, for compassion,
To drink a martyr's blood!—I say—but what
Avails that I repeat, such wicked men
Veil base designs beneath religion's cloak,
Entangle private pique with sacred things,
And make themselves the sanguinary tools
Of vice? Who knows it not? The prince has ever shown
A gallant mind, and sympathetic heart.
His gentle manners grace a noble form:
From earliest age, his father's joy and pride,
In excellence he grew. You sung, my lords, his praise,
And thought him noble: so I think him still.
A mind once dignified can ne'er descend
To crimes so black. Contempt, nay outrage, oft
He bears in silent sorrow, and respect.
'Tis true that grief is often made a crime,
And is but fuel to an angry mind.
Oh, Philip, he's your son! Appease your wrath!
Take pity on his woes! He is not guilty;
But, ah, he's most unhappy! Were he more
Tenfold more vile than these fair-speaking lords
Would prove, a father cannot, dare not, take
The life he gave.

Phil. At length, one pitying heart
I find: oh bless'd compassion! I'll yield to
Thy pious dictates! I a father! and
Will be a father still! Myself, my kingdom,
All I resign, to Heav'n's impervious will.
My son, perhaps, is but the instrument
Of dread Jehovah's wrath, which I've incurr'd.
Perish Hispania, perish Philip, so
Carlos be but sav'd! He's now absolv'd.

Gom. Would you be greater than the law? Why call
Us here? You can without our sanction break
The laws. Acquit, acquit the prince! But, if
You should, some fatal day, repent this pity.

Per. Pity, indeed, wou'd not avail; for here
It wears, methinks, a lying mask. Decide
Among yourselves, I dare no longer sit
In a such a court. I still hold honor dear;
For life I care not: that I never bath'd
My hands in guiltless blood the world can vouch.
Remain who will. To Heav'n I raise my vows;
To Heav'n, that knows the truth. But why make this
Appeal? Is Heav'n *alone* not ignorant?
Can I not read, on every face, that ev'ry man's

Convinc'd; tho' every man is dumb? Has it
Not long been deem'd a capital offence
To hear or speak the truth?
Phil. Know'st thou to whom
Thou speak'st?
Per. The father of Don Carlos:
Phil. And thy lord!
[*Exit* Perez.

Leon. 'Tis true, my liege, you are the prince's sire;
And who reads not a father's anguish and
Despair in every look? But you are too
The father of your people, and they venerate
That sacred name, tho' it is slighted by
The prince. He is but one, and numberless
Are they; he is in safety, while the rest
Stand on the brink of danger; he is guilty, *they*
Are innocent Can you debate to save
One, or *the whole?*
Phil. Oh cease to stab me to
The heart! Alas, my strength forsakes me. I
Must call another council, where I shall
Not sit, and where the holy ministers
Of Heav'n shall give their voice. They are not sway'd
By mundane passions! Truth will issue from
Their lips; and truth alone they'll hear. Away,
And judge the prince. Were I to come, I should
Disturb the course of justice, or expose
My courage to a trial most severe. [*Exeunt* Counsellors.

SCENE VI.

Phil. How many traitors are ye? Perez, dar'st
Thou brave me? Haply, he has read my heart!
No, no.—In what a dauntless tone he spoke!
Can souls like these exist? Where I am king,
Can such a man continue long to breathe? [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Carlos *alone.*

Carlos.

OH, night, more genial to this horrid court
Than day, I hail thy welcome shades! Not that
Thou bring'st a momentary pause to grief;
But thou dost veil from sight the hideous forms

Of cruelty and vice, that crowd in these
Abodes. Elvira says I may expect
Her here: she comes on Isabella's part.
What would she say? How awful is this calm!
Oh, gentle sleep, canst thou descend 'mid restless cares,
Remorse, suspicion, and black crime, to smooth
The traitor's and the tyrant's couch; while thou
Still fli'st an innocent oppress'd?—But I
Regret thee not: fond mem'ry visions every charm
And mental grace my soul adores! What spell
Confines me to this spot? 'Twas here she stood;
'Twas here her lips at once spoke misery
And bliss! Since that ill-fated moment, I
Have been less wretched—but, alas, less pure!
Whence rise these coward fears? Are they the just
Reward of guilt?—Of guilt!—When did I e'er
Transgress? My tongue avow'd the passion of
My heart; but who could love like me and not
Avow? Who comes? Elvira? No! What noise
Is that? Whose steps are those? What blaze of light?
In arms? To me? Traitors, avaunt! [*Draws his sword.*

SCENE II.

CARLOS, PHILIP, (*followed by Soldiers with arms and torches.*)

Carl. Oh Heav'ns,
My father! Thus attended!
Phil. Now! What seek
You here, alone and arm'd, at such an hour?
What would you? Whither go you? Your intentions!
Carl. May soon be told. The sword I drew in self
Defence, against this arm'd escort, falls from
My palsied hand before my father! I
Resist not, Sire. But say, need you a poor pretext?
And what? Oh, father, subterfuge becomes
Not kings; but mean excuse still less becomes
Your son.
Phil. You add defiance to your guilt!
'Tis well! Such daring is the last resource
Of harden'd villainy. Formerly, you
Veil'd your rebel thoughts; mask'd the blackness of
Your heart in feign'd respect. But throw it off;
'Tis better you should break all barriers to
Your rage, shed all your mortal venom, dauntless
Avow each fell design, and glory in
Your magnanimity!
Carl. What must I, Sire, avow?
Oh, father, spare me useless outrage! I'll

Submit to all your vengeance can ordain,
And call it just, if grateful to your soul!
Phil. Alas, in age so tender, how have you
Arriv'd at perfidy so great? Where have
You learn'd iniquity thus black, that now,
Detected by the king in such abhorred
Deeds, you dare to meet his eye unchang'd?
Carl. Where
Learn'd iniquity? Sire, this palace gave
Me birth——
Phil. I know it, wretch, to my disgrace
And woe!
Carl. Then why delay to end your grief?
Why shed you not your son's pure blood? 'Twill make
You happy!
Phil. My son! You!
Carl. Speak! What is my
Offence?
Phil. You ask of me! Of me! Is not
Your heart torn by remorse? Ah, no! Long has
It been a stranger to your breast: if aught
You feel, 'tis rage that I've escap'd your murd'rous arm.
Carl. What is't I hear? I seek my father's life?
I charg'd with parricide?—But you do not
Believe—Oh no! What proof have you?
Whence rise these horrid doubts?
Phil. Doubts! Certainty
Lies in the hate you bear me.
Carl. Father, force
Me not, oh, force me not to pass beyond
The awful bar, which Heav'n and man have plac'd,
Between the subject and the king, the son
And father! Make me not a wretch!
Phil. You have
With sacrilegious foot, long overstep'd
Those bounds. What is't, I say? You never knew
They did exist! Quit Virtue's lofty strain,
It fits you ill; speak as you feel! Unveil
Your treasons plann'd, and those you have achiev'd!
Be brief. Fear you that I'm less noble than
You are base? If you speak truly, without
Disguise, you still may hope: but if you're silent, or
Attempt concealment, then beware!
Carl. I'll speak:
I'm driven to excess!—I know myself
Too well to fear your threats, and *you* too well
To hope. Take back the life you gave! Oh fatal gift!
'Tis yours; my honor is my own. You gave
It not, nor can rob me of it. Were I

From cowardice to own myself a parricide,
I were a wretch indeed!—You here shall see
Me breathe my last; prepare a death opprobrious, long,
And cruel: Carlos still shall be himself.
You, my father, alone unmov'd will see
Me die.
Phil. Is't thus, rash boy, you speak your lord?
Is't thus you justify your crimes?
Carl. My crimes!
You hate me: that's my only crime. Blood is
Your beverage: thus, Sire, I justify
Myself: your pow'r is absolute; hence you
Have right.
Phil. Holla! Arrest him, guards!
Carl. This is
The answer of a despot Sire, load me
With chains! Behold, my bosom's bar'd: come, plunge
Your sword! Why do you hesitate? Is this
Inhuman act your first? Has not each day
Of your black reign been mark'd with blood?
Phil. Be gone,
I say! conduct him to the tow'r, and cast
Him in the blackest dungeon: on your lives,
Obey.
Carl. Fear not; your ministers are cruel as
Yourself.
Phil. Force him away! [*Exeunt* Soldiers, Carlos.

SCENE III.—Philip, Isabella.

Isab. Oh, Heav'ns! What is't
I see!
Phil. (*sternly*) Why come you hither, queen?
Isab. (*timidly*) I hear
Sounds of distress and mournful lamentations.
Phil. 'Tis true; you hear.
Isab. The prince forc'd from your sight?
Phil. 'Tis even so! 'Twas he—
Isab. Your son?
Phil. Do you
Grow pale and tremble at the sight?
Isab. I!
Phil. Well
You may. Your terror is *no little* proof,
To me, how well you *love*. You tremble for
Your consort: but, be calm; the danger's o'er!
Isab. The danger? What?
Phil. It was extreme: but now
My life——

Isab. Your life!
Phil. So *dear* and *necessary* to
You, queen, is safe.
Isab. The traitor?
Phil. Will receive
His just award. Fear not my heart again
Should yield to feminine compassion. No,
The season's pass'd: the voice of justice, loud
And terrible, shall now alone be heard!
Isab. But what's the prince's crime?
Phil. Oh, Heav'ns! Perhaps,
'Twas not alone my life he sought! The wretch,
Who thirsted for his father's blood, would not
Have spar'd his father's wife—if her he view'd
Alike with envious hate!
Isab. Have spar'd? What say
You, Sire? Oh, wretched me! The prince—
Phil. Ungrateful to
Us both, forgets the many *favours* he
Receiv'd—But calm yourself; be happy: I
Will take upon myself th' important office to
Secure *your everlasting peace and mine.* [*Exit* Philip.
Isab. What language! What a frown!—I scarcely can recall
My troubled senses! What said he? Can he
Suspect my love?—Oh no! 'Tis too conceal'd.
And yet his threat'ning eye, so fix'd
On me.—Oh, wretched Isabel! What meant
He by his everlasting peace and mine?
My peace?—Oh, Heav'ns! And what escap'd my lips?
Did I not name the prince? What horrid fears
Congeal my blood! Where is he gone? Ah, where?
Why speeds he thus away? What shall I do?
I fain would follow—but my feet refuse
To guide my trembling frame.

SCENE V.—Isabella, Gomez.

Gom. Forgive th' intrusion, queen:
I thought my liege was here.
Isab. He was e'en now.
Gom. I then with haste must seek him; for he wâits
To learn the great event. [*Going.*
Isab. Event?—Oh, stay!
What is't?
Gom. If you have spoken with the king,
He must have told you how impatiently
He waits the final judgment.

Isab. No; he spoke
Ambiguously of treason, but he——
Gom. Did
Not tell the traitor's name?
Isab. The prince——
Gom. You know
Then all. I now come from the council——
Isab. Come?——
What council? What bring you? Alas!——
Gom. They long
Discuss'd th' important cause, and all at last
Agreed——
Isab. To what? Explain.
Gom. Here is the sentence;
The king has but to sign——
Isab. It dooms?
Gom. The prince
To death.
Isab. To death? Wretches!—To death!—What is
His crime?
Gom. Did not the king explain?
Isab. Oh, no!
Gom. He has attempted Philip's life!
Isab. Oh, Heav'ns!
The prince? Carlos!
Gom. It is the king himself
Who makes the charge; and lays before us proof——
Isab. His father? And what proof? fictitious proof!
Alas, there surely is some other cause,
Which you conceal? Oh tell his *real* offence!
Gom. His *real* offence?—And dare I speak, if you
Are uninform'd? It might betray my life.
Isab. Oh, what say you? How can you fear I should
Betray?
Gom. If I but speak a word, I shall
Betray the king! my sov'reign lord!—But why
Seek *you so ardently* to learn the truth?
Isab. I seek?—'Tis but a woman's wish.
Gom. What can
I tell you, queen?—The prince is in great danger;
Nay, likely he may fall. But what are *you*
To him? He's not *your* son—his death cannot
Harm you; nay, it may place your future sons
On Spain's illustrious throne. Believe me, queen,
His *criminality* lies in the *love*——
Isab. What say you?——
Gom. Philip bears you: gladly he
Would have a son of yours succeed him, which
Can never be, while Carlos lives.

Isab. (*aside*) I breathe!——
Dare you suppose I have a mind so base?
Gom. 'Tis Philip's thought, not mine, I thus explain.
But——
Isab. Then that which I could never believe
Is true; a father can abhor his *own*,
His *only* son!
Gom. Oh, lady, much I pity you,
If you before so little knew the king!
Isab. What say you! Whom do I trust?
Gom. Nay, since I
Read true compassion on your brow, I'll speak
The horrid secrets that oppress my heart.
'Tis true, alas, too true, the prince, ill-fated youth,
Is only infamous in having such
A sire!
Isab. You make me shudder!——
Gom. I too shrink!
Know you whence rises this unnat'ral hate?
From dastard envy! The pure virtues of
The prince inflam'd the king's imagin'd greatness.
He finds his son too diff'rent from himself,
And rather, oh impiety, would have
Him die, than live more great!
Isab. Oh, sire unmatch'd,
In ruthless cruelty! but still more vile!
Why does the council doom the innocent
To die?
Gom. What council dare oppose a king
So absolute? He brings the charge himself.
Each knows 'tis false; but each, in terror for
Himself, by silence gives assent. On *us*
The shame of this vile sentence falls: *we* are
The guilty instruments of *his* revenge.
We shudder while we strike; but 'tis in vain:
Who dar'd refuse would soon fall victims to
His rage.
Isab. Is this a dream?—Amazement ties
My tongue! Is there no hope?—Must he unjustly fall?
Gom. In artifice, the king's supreme indeed!
At first, he'll seem to doubt, make specious show
Of sorrow, and compassion, nay perhaps
He will delay, ere he pronounce his death:
But fools are they who think his grief sincere;
Or hope, because a while he still forbears
To strike, his deep and inward wrath is cool'd.
Isab. Ah, if your heart is not of rock, like his,
Take pity on the prince!
Gom. What can I do?

Isab. Perhaps——
Gom. With fruitless tears, in secret mourn
The noble victim's fate: no more is in
My pow'r.
Isab. Oh, God! What age has heard, what eye
Beheld, atrocity so black!
Gom. Could I
But save the prince, no danger would I fear!
And, Heav'n's my judge, remorse, the legacy
A tyrant's fatal friendship leaves, corrodes, nay wrings
My heart; but——
Isab. If you really feel remorse
It may afford the prince no little aid.
Nor need you sacrifice yourself. Philip
Suspects you not: you may clandestinely
Abet the prince's flight: who could betray?
Who knows? The day may come in which the king
Again may be himself; and nobly would
He recompense the man, whose courage sav'd
His glory, and his son.
Gom. And, grant I dar'd,
Would the prince consent? Know you the contempt,
Th' indignant rage with which he'll spurn at flight,
And brave his doom? No fear of death can shake
His lofty mind. He'll obstinately perish,
And all advice or aid, from *me*, would be
Suspicious, and receiv'd with scorn: he thinks
Me Philip's slave——
Isab. Is this the only bar?
Suffer me to see him; lead to the tow'r,
Where you have free access: my pray'rs, I hope,
Will move him to comply. Oh, grant my urgent suit.
The night is far advanc'd: prepare for his
Escape, and keep this fatal paper from
The king, who may not yet expect 'tis giv'n.
Oh, let us try—I pray you let us haste,
And angels be our guard!—Delay not, I
Conjure you.
Gom. Who would not fulfil a work
So pious! At my peril I will make
Th' attempt! Come, lady! Heav'n will not desert
Th' afflicted mortal who deserts not Heav'n! [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Dungeon.*

Carlos.

OH, death! from thee alone I now must hope.
Oh, could it be an honorable death!
But infamy, alone, I must expect
From cruel Philip.—One dread thought preys on
My soul more agonizing still! Perhaps
He knows my love! Unusual rage, in his
Despite, blaz'd from his dark ferocious eye.
His speaking with the queen, then calling me,
And watching—Heav'nly Powers, how shall I act?
The queen! Alas! barbarian! he, perhaps,
Ere now, has wreak'd on her the vengeance of
Imaginary guilt: for tyrants strike
If their suspicious minds but dream offence.
But how should Philip learn a secret known
To none, perhaps, and scarcely to ourselves?
My sighs may have betray'd my heart; but are
The gentle sighs of love a language tyrants know?
Need *such* a father *such* a cause to act
A part unnatural and black?—His hate
Is mortal, and I see the day is come
In which my blood must satiate his rage.
Oh, fickle throng of fortune-smiling friends,
Where are you now? A sword is all I ask;
But none of you will bring the friendly steel,
To snatch me from disgrace! What noise is that?
The hinges creak—the massy bars give way—
What have I to expect!—I'll listen—Heav'ns!

SCENE II.—*Enter* ISABELLA.

The queen! *You* Isabella here! who was
Your guide? What brings you hither? Love, your duty,
Or compassion? How gain'd y' access?
Isab. Alas,
You know not all the horror of your fate!
You're branded with the name of parricide.
Your father makes the charge: a wicked council dooms
You, prince, to die; the king has but to sign.
Carl. If so, my time is short.
Isab. And you are still
Unmov'd?

Carl. I long have center'd ev'ry hope
In death: to breathe my last near you, you know,
Was all I wish'd. The horrid crime with which
I'm stigmatiz'd, may grieve but not surprise.
Yes, die I must; and can I shrink when you
Are come t' announce my death?
Isab. Oh, if you love,
Speak not of death; yield, I conjure you,
To these fearful times.
Carl. Yield! Too well I see
The cruel task to vilify is yours.
My unrelenting father sends you to——
Isab. How! Think you I'm the minister of Philip?
Carl. He might compel, or by his arts prevail
On you to try me thus: but, if not so,
What could induce the king to let you come?
Isab. The king? Oh, Heav'ns! Were he to know——
Carl. Alas,
To Philip, lady, all is known. What say
You! Who presum'd to break his lord's command?
Isab. His fav'rite Gomez.
Carl. Gomez!—Heav'nly pow'rs!
Oh, lady, what an odious name you have
Pronounc'd! A name most fatal and terrific!
Isab. He's not your foe, as you suppos'd.
Carl. Oh, God!
If e'er I thought he was my *friend,* shame more
Than rage would dye my burning cheek.
Isab. Yet he,
Alone, takes pity on your fate: 'twas he
Reveal'd the king's atrocious plot.
Carl. Oh, too
Incautious, too believing Isabel!
What have you done? Why did you trust in such
Compassion? If he told you true, the viler tool
Of a vile king, it was but to insnare.
Isab. To what effect? If you will grant my suit,
He soon will give no little proof that he's
Sincere: he led me hither, secretly,
And now prepares to favour your escape.
I urg'd him to't: lose not a moment! Fly
From Philip, death, and me!
Carl. Oh, fly yourself,
While yet you can, far from this place! The feign'd
Compassion Gomez show'd was treach'rous as
Himself. In what insidious nets you have
Been caught! 'Tis now *indeed* I tremble? Oh,
What horrid doubts arise! The myst'ry of
Our love is known to Philip—and——

Isab. Ah no!
The moment you were forc'd away, anon,
We met: his wrath was fearful, and my soul
Recoil'd. The dread *you* feel then seiz'd on *me*;
But afterward, more calm, I thought on what
He said, and am convinc'd my terror was
Unfounded: for he charg'd you, not alone
With having wish'd to take his life, but with
Designs on mine.
Carl. Could I unravel this
Most intricate and demon's web, my soul
Must be as vile, or viler, than his own.
But I'm too sure your coming here conceals
Some horrid fraud: that which might be surmise
Is now confirm'd, be what it may. Retire,
And quickly, from this fatal place. In vain
You think, or hope, that Gomez will assist
My flight; and still more vainly, even if
He would, that I should e'er consent.
Isab. And am
I doom'd to pass my melancholy days
In such a court?
Carl. Alas, you are! But linger not.
Away, if life is dear.
Isab. Life dear to *me?*
Carl. My *honor*, then, and your unblemish'd fame.
Isab. Can I abandon you, in such an hour?
Carl. Why brave you danger thus? To what effect?
You seek destruction, for you cannot save.
Breathe on the clearest crystal, and 'tis sullied:
So is the purity of woman by
A breath. Let not the tyrant triumph, e'en
In thought, o'er fancied guilt. Go, hide your tears;
Stifle your sighs; and hear the tidings of
My death with stoic calm. To virtue consecrate
The mournful days you may survive; and, if
You seek for solace to your grief in this
Vile court, *one* honest man remains! 'Tis Perez.
You know him well: in secret you may weep,
And speak of me—But prithee now depart.
Retire—force not unmanly tears—give not
Ten thousand deaths in one! Receive my last
Farewel!—and leave me!—Go! I now have need
Of all my courage, for the fatal hour
Of death draws nigh.

SCENE III.—PHILIP, ISABELLA, CARLOS.

Phil. 'Tis come, vile wretch, 'tis come!
I bring it thee!

Isab. Oh sight! oh treachery!
Carl. I am prepar'd: now kill me!
Phil. Miscreant,
Thou di'st! but first, perfidious pair, you shall
Be call'd to terrible account. I know
You well! I long have known the impious flame
Which burns within your veins; and, tho' repress'd,
The fury that consumes you. How oft
Have I subdu'd the rage I felt, and borne
A long and painful silence!—But at length,
You're fall'n within my pow'r: why should I grieve?
Are vain complaints the arms I ought to use?
Vengeance I wish, and vengeance I will have.
Quickly shall it fall, and heavily!—
But, first, I'll triumph in your shame! Think not,
Vile lady, that I e'er have lov'd thee: or
That jealous rage distracts my heart. A thing
So abject as thyself ne'er fix'd the high
Affections of a Philip! Nor could she,
Who merited his love, betray. In me
Thou hast not wrong'd thy lover, but thy lord.
Thou hast disgrac'd the sacred title of
My consort. I ne'er wish'd thy love; but still,
The fear thou ow'st thy king shou'd so have aw'd,
Thou shouldst not e'en have dar'd to think of love.
Thou, base seducer, art beneath reproof.
Nought can surprise from thee: a crime so black
Was worthy of thy heart. The guilty sighs
Ye both in secret heav'd, the silence, and the grief,
I well observ'd, and even now can see
You cherish in your impious hearts, were but
Too certain proofs of your offence. Why do
I waste the moments in mere words: you've sinn'd
Alike; alike shall be your fate.
Carl. What is't
I hear? She's innocent! Not e'en the shadow of
Offence is hers! Her spotless heart, I swear,
Fed not a flame impure: she scarcely knew
I lov'd: she bad——
Phil. I know how far ye each
Have gone; I know you have not yet presum'd
In thought to violate my royal couch.
Had you done this, would you be here? But words
Of ardent love flow'd from thy serpent mouth;
She listen'd; that's enough.
Carl. You're wrong'd by me
Alone. I'll not deny a transient ray
Of hope gleam'd in my heart; but soon the queen's

Pure virtue broke the charm. She heard me, it
Is true; but only to reprove, and chase
The fatal impious passion from my breast.
Fatal indeed! Alas, too fatal now!
But once it was legitimate. She was
My bride! You know it well; you gave her to
My arms; and you had more the right to give
Than rob me of the gift. I'm guilty ev'ry way!
Yes, I adore her!—You have seiz'd my all!
What can you more?—Feast on revenge, and drink
My blood to quench your jealous rage:
But spare the queen; she's innocent.
Phil. She fail'd
In courage, but her guilt match'd yours. You speak
Not, lady, in your turn? But silence best
Convicts you: impious love (denial is
In vain) burns in your bosom. When I spoke,
Not long ago, with studied art, to you
Of Carlos, you did wantonly betray
Yourself. You bad me recollect he was
My son. Perfidious as you are, you durst
Not say your lover! Had you less in thought
Betray'd your duty, honor, and the laws——
Isab. My silence does not rise from fear. I'm lost
In wonder, at the unexampl'd rage
And artifice of your impervious heart. At length,
Bewilder'd sense returns! I am your wife,
And for that heavy sin must now atone.
I have not wrong'd you. In the face of Heav'n
And Don Carlos, I spurn imputed guilt!
But, in my heart——
Carl. Oh, hear her not! Weak pity prompts
Her words!
Isab. In vain you seek to save: each word
You say pours poison on the cank'ring wound.
Excuse avails no more; I wish but to
Escape the matchless torture his dire sight
Inflicts.—Could tyrants feel so pure so dignified
A sentiment, I'd tell you, king, 'twas you
First taught us love: 'twas you, from earliest age,
That influenc'd my thoughts: in him you bad
Me centre each fond hope: with him I thought
To spend a life of bliss! 'Twas then my duty, and
Your law, to love the prince. Who made it now
A crime? You, by dissolving ties so holy.
Men must submit to arbitrary pow'r,
But will the heart so quickly change? The love
I had imbib'd was strong; but, when your wife,
I buried it within my breast. I hop'd

That time, my virtue, and, perhaps, that you
Would chase——
Phil. I then will do what neither time
Nor your *pure* virtue could effect; yes, I
Will quench the impious passion in your blood.
Isab. You rule with terror, and delight in blood.
Are these allurements, think you, to induce
Me to bestow on you the heart I might
Recover from the prince? On *you*, unlike
Your son, as virtue is to vice! You e'er
Till now have seen me trembling, and confus'd;
But now I fear you not. I hitherto
Conceal'd the impious flame; for such I thought
It was; I now proclaim it! since I find
You are more impious still.
Phil. Oh, pair immaculate,
Ye well are match'd! It now is to be prov'd
If ye can die as *bravely* as ye speak.

SCENE IV.—*Enter* GOMEZ *with a bloody sword in one hand, and a bowl of poison in the other.*

Phil. Mark'd you, Gomez, what I said? Are my
Commands obey'd?
Gom. This moment Perez fell, pierc'd to
The heart: this sword is reeking in his blood.
Carl. Oh, sight of horror!
Isab. Cruelty unmatch'd!
Phil. The clan of traitors is not yet destroy'd:
But you may see the recompence reserv'd
For your accomplices.
Carl. Alas, how many deaths
Am I condemn'd to bear, before I die!
Thou too, oh Perez! Rage! Despair! Soon I
Shall follow thee! Where is the fatal sword?
Oh bring it quick! and may my blood alone
Assuage this tiger's quenchless thirst!
Isab. Oh, sword!—
Let mine appease his ill-born rage!
Phil. Cease this
Ignoble strife, the poison'd bowl or sword
Are at your choice. Thou, mocking boaster, first
Decide.
Carl. Oh, sword, still warm with guiltless blood,
Thou'lt bring me liberty and peace. For thee,
Unhappy queen, death only now remains!
Too freely thou hast spoken: but I pray
Thou'lt take the bowl; death will be thus more easy.
This is the last request of inauspicious love.

Rouse all thy fortitude—Behold! (*stabs himself*) I die.
Now follow me—The bowl!—The bowl!—Delay
Not— [*Dies.*

Isab. Oh!—Yes, I will follow thee! Death, how
Welcome art thou!

[*Going to take the bowl, which* Philip *suddenly seizes and dashes to the ground.*

Phil. Live! Live! in thy despite——

Isab. Away!—Oh, cruel destiny!—He dies,
And I must live?——

Phil. Yes, thou shalt spend long years
Of ling'ring woe, torn from thy minion.
Thy sighs and tears will yield a banquet to
My soul. When time shall have allay'd thy grief,
And life again is dear, then thou shalt die.

Isab. *I* live with thee? *I* bear thy odious presence?—
No! Never!—I will die!—The deadly draught
Is spilt, but, yet—(*rapidly seizing* Philip's *sword, and stabbing herself*) the sword remains.

Phil. Forbear!

Isab. I die!

Phil. Oh, Heav'ns! What is't I see!

Isab. Thou see'st
Thy wife—and son—expire—both innocent—
Both slain—by thee!—Belov'd—Carlos—I come. [*Dies.*

Phil. A stream of blood, and, oh, what blood o'erflows!
I have revenge, most amply horrid! But,
Am I at peace?—Gomez, let the foul deed,
Be hid from ev'ry eye. Thy silence may
Save Philip's honor and perhaps—*thy* life. [*Exeunt Omnes.*

THE END.

REMARKS.

Among the black actions which stain the memory of Philip the Second, there is none that has given so much employment, to invention, as the death of his son Don Carlos, and his queen the unhappy Isabella. To this the Abbé Saint Réal, in his historical novels (a species of writing which when it intermingles truth and falsehood deserves to be severely reprehended) has chiefly given birth: but the character of Philip was, in its general tendency, so black, cruel, and atrocious, that even the imagination of a poet can with difficulty equal the truth. Alfieri, not alone with honest indignation, but, feeling a dignified moral

horror against such a man, has painted him with some of the vices that distinguished his character; particularly with the blackest fraud, and the most cold-blooded cruelty. His master vices, ambition and bigotry, could not unfortunately become a part of the present subject: nor could the poet sufficiently affix on his name that detestation with which it has been impressed by his actions, because it is not known how Don Carlos and Isabella perished: but, that Isabella had been affianced to Carlos, that Don Carlos died violently, and that Isabella did not long survive, appear to be indubitable facts. As Don Carlos is here depicted, the rashness of which his father and his enemies accused him is scarcely apparent. That which meaner minds might call rashness, the poet has made a noble fortitude, and contempt of death, by combining it with a full conviction, on the mind of Carlos, that his father was fully determined to take away his life; and only endeavoured, by the most vicious yet profound dissimulation, to draw from the lips of Carlos some confession, which might aid to colour or extenuate the crime. Isabella recollects, but not quite sufficiently as a profound cause of her affection for Carlos, the contrast of situation of having actually married the father and that of having espoused the son: to whom she was first affianced, by Philip himself. In such a woman, this distracting thought must have been continually torturing the mind. Gomez and Leonardo are fine and true examples, of the dangerous depravity which such a master as Philip must create. Perez has not a sufficient part in the fable to display his magnanimity; nor does it by any means equal that which the German tragic poet, SCHILLER, has given to the *Marquis della Posa*, in his tragedy of Don Carlos, which character is most admirably drawn. That ALFIERI possessed the highest qualities of the human mind, the enthusiasm of the poet, and the inestimable moral dignity of man, those who read this tragedy will scarcely deny. I feel a delightful, and I hope a just pride, when I inform the public that this translation is the work of one of my daughters, and that the corrections made by me have been very few and purposely sparing. To impose the joint labours of two persons as the performance of one on the world would be moral turpitude.

DRAMATIC BIOGRAPHY.

SOME ACCOUNT OF ALFIERI.

I AM sorry that the documents I possess, concerning this man of genius, are so few. I have indeed none, which are printed, except what are contained in his own works, and what are already before the public in a HISTORICAL MEMOIR ON ITALIAN TRAGEDY*, a work which is or deserves to be well known, for the mass of information it contains on a subject that is highly interesting to literature, yet one with which English readers in general are but little acquainted.

Of the time when, or the province where, our poet was born I have seen no account. The title page to his works runs thus, "*Tragedie di* VITTORIO ALFIERI DA ASTI:" and, in a letter prefixed to them, written by *Ranieri de' Calsabigi*, and signed Naples, August 20, 1783, he is addressed by the title of Count. To this letter he writes an answer dated September in the same year. These letters relate to the opposition and the success with which his four first tragedies were received, by the critics and the public; and the manner of acting tragedy, and pronouncing heroic verse, in Italy. To his *Bruto Primo* he prefixed a dedication "*Al chiarissimo e libro uomo, il Generale Washington:*" literally, *To the Renowned Free man, General Washington:* which dedication is dated Paris, December 31, 1788. ALFIERI is now dead: at least I fear so; for, within some months, his death was announced in one or more of our daily newspapers. The following is the account given of him, in the above-mentioned historical memoir †.

"Impatient of the tœdium of an inactive life, and nobly ambitious of fame, Count Vittorio Alfieri of Asti ‡, while yet a youth, struck into the dramatic walk. '*Ciò che mi mosse a scrivere da prima,*' says he, '*fu la noja, e il tedio d'ogni casa,*

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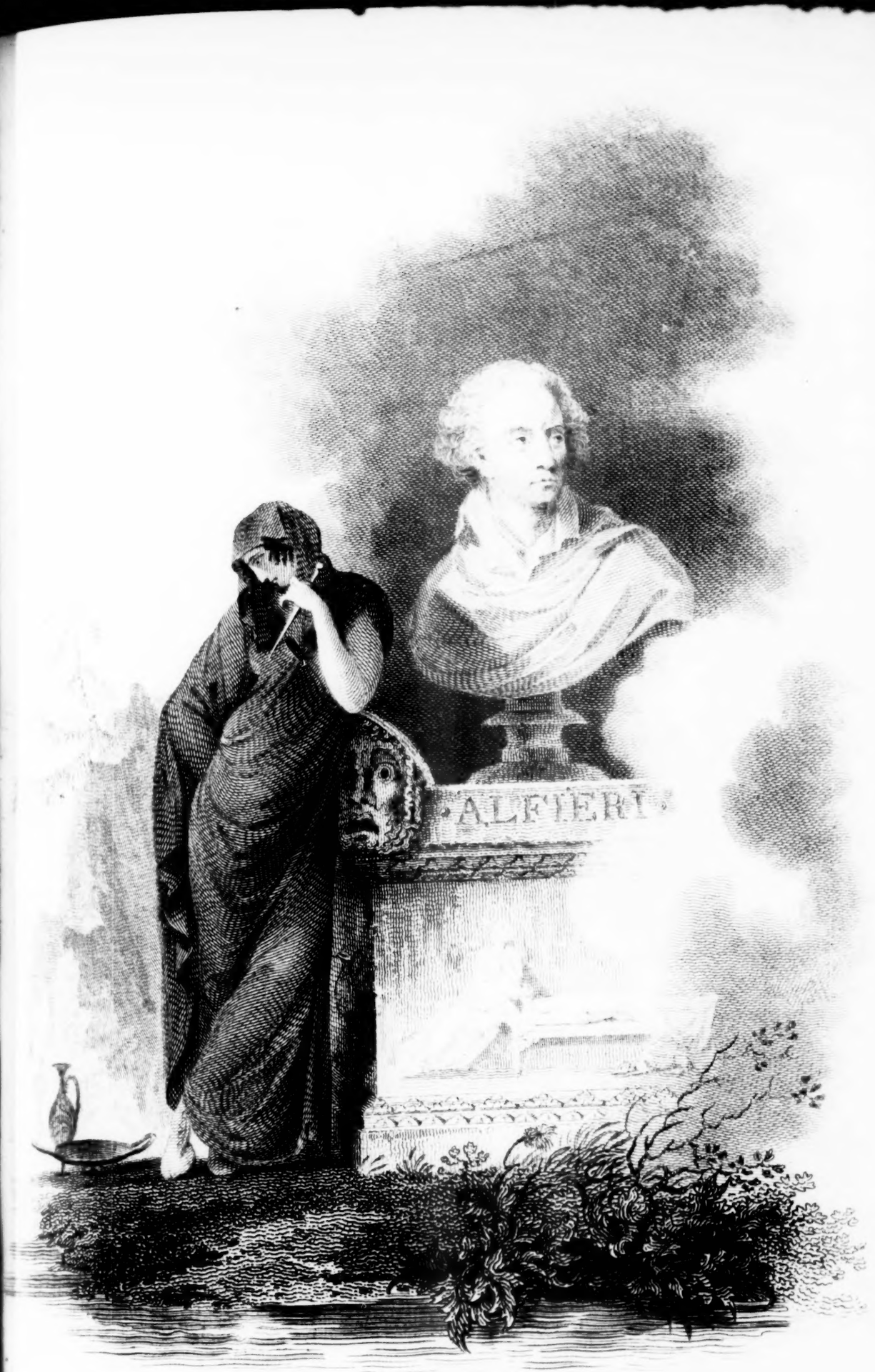
* Quarto, London: 1799. † Page 294.

‡ Asti may have been either the place of his birth, his residence, or from which he took his title. EDITOR.



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misto a bollor di gioventù, desiderio di gloria, e necessità di occuparmi in qualche maniera, che più fosse confacente alla mia inclinazione *.' " Such was the ardor with which he engaged in " this new pursuit, that he produced, in less than six months, " a tragedy, entitled Cleopatra, which was he candidly con- " fesses what might be expected from his ignorance, and pre- " sumption,"—'*un mostro*' [A monster.] " Yet this play, he " informs us, was twice represented on the public stage in " Turin, where," '*sia detto a vergogna degli uditori, non meno* '*che dell' autore* †,' " it was not only heard and tolerated, but " even applauded. Thus suddenly transformed, to use his " own words, from a dissipated youth into a tragic author, he " determined to endeavour at qualifying himself to support his " new character. In order to this, much was to be done. He " had little Latin, but no Greek—was totally ignorant of the " English, and had paid so little attention to the cultivation of " the Italian language, that his knowledge of the '*pura lingua* '*toscano*' was '*presso che al abbicci* ‡." " He therefore thought " it necessary to abstain from his favorite indulgence—the " perusal of French authors—and devote himself to the study " of the best Italian writers with a view to acquire the means " of clothing his ideas in a suitable garb. He did not, how- " ever, neglect the book of Nature: indeed he must be allowed " to have studied it with uncommon success. He seems to " have explored, with the inquisitive eye of genius, all the " recesses of the human mind, and to have noted, with anxious " care, the workings of the passions in all their various modi- " fications. Hence the power which he acquired over them. " But, however ardently he might have labored to attain the " mastery of his vernacular tongue, he undoubtedly failed in " the attempt; for even in his most elaborate works, his diction

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* I was first excited to write by the irksome weariness of an idle life, added to youthful enthusiasm, the love of glory, and the necessity of employing my time congenial to my inclination.

† Be it spoken equally to the disgrace of the audience and the author.

‡ Was almost in its infancy.

" is harsh, inelegant, and sometimes ungrammatical." '*Peccato,*' " says an Italian critic, speaking of the beauties of our author's " tragedies, '*che tante gemme siano state legate in piombo, che col suo* ' *tristo coloro abbate ed infievolisce il loro stupendo splendore**.' " His language, nevertheless, is nervous and appropriate: in fact " in his 'hoarse rough verse' we often hear a mighty voice, " at whose pealing sound vice stands appalled.

" In the construction of his dramas, our author departs from the " ancient model. He rejects the chorus, and is heedless of the " unities. Sparing of confidants, he abounds in monologues; and, " from mismanagement of his situations, he often fails in illusion. " Still however his genius predominates: his dramas, with all " their faults, seldom fail to produce the intended effect."

Four or five years ago, at Paris, I frequently heard of the fame of Count Alfieri. A Milanese nobleman spoke of him in such high terms, and so decisively pronounced him to be incomparably the best tragic poet Italy had ever produced, that we were determined to procure his works; and in them his poetic character appeared so grand that my daughter was induced to translate the Tragedy of Philip II. According to the authority of the above-mentioned Italian, the style of ALFIERI was so concise, and the construction so difficult, that he could not be understood by many of his countrymen: he had in reality created a new poetic language. The Italians call him their Shakespear.

We were further informed that, in the beginning of the French Revolution, he was ardent and indefatigable to promote what appeared at first to be almost so miraculously to the benefit of mankind: but that, after being a witness of the atrocities committed by the French in Italy, he became so disgusted, and so deeply grieved, that he retired to his country seat to lament the catastrophe in silence. We had friends who, when at Siena, were personally acquainted with him; and, if memory do not fail, they informed us he was then between sixty and seventy, and a pleasant amiable old gentleman.

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* It is a pity that jewels so numerous should be set in lead; the gloomy tint of which dims their dazzling splendor.

The following sonnet was given me by a friend, in London; and perhaps it will not be easy to find so severe a satire, in so short a space: it likewise pourtrays the turn of his thoughts, relative to the influence of bad governments on men.

Vuota insalubre Region, che stato
Ti vai nomando; arridi campi incolti
Squallidi, muti, estenuati volti
Di Popol reo, codardo, insanguinato;

Impotente non libero Senato,
Di astuti vili in fulgid' ostro avvolti;
Ricchi Patrizï e, piu che ricchi, stolti;
Prence che fa sciocchezza altrui, beato!

Città, non Cittadini; augusti Tempï,
Religion non gia; leggi che, ingiuste
Ogni lustro cangiar vede, ma in peggio;
Chiavi che, compre un dì, schiudeano agli Empï
Del Ciel le porte, or per età vetuste;
Non sei tu, Roma, d'ogni vizio il seggio?

I give the following not as a poetical translation, but as nearly a literal one as the construction of language appears to allow.

Desolate sickly waste, that dost continue
To call thyself a State, uncultivated,
Arid region; exhausted, squalid, mute,
Cowardly, blood-thirsty race; impotent,
Enslaved Senate, in cunning base, altho'
In purple cloth'd; wealthy patricians, yet
In folly far more rich; Beatic prince,
That mak'st holiness a farce*; City, with
Not a single patriot; Temples august,
But no religion; Laws, of such injustice
They ev'ry lustre change, to laws still worse;
Keys, procur'd to open t' impiety
The gates of Heaven, useless now from age;
Rome, art not thou the seat of ev'ry vice?

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* Or *Beatic prince,*
So Folly has pronounc'd thee;

ACCOUNT OF NEW PERFORMERS.

AN author can scarcely impose upon himself a task more delicate, than that of estimating the merits and demerits of new performers. Among the stimulants to excellence, public applause is perhaps the greatest; and public applause depends on public opinion, which, if it be swayed to the prejudice of the actor, excludes hope and palsies the rising faculties. All observers of the theatre have remarked the feeble and defective manner in which actors have originally begun, and the slow advances they at first made, though they have finally become ornaments to their profession, and the support of the stage. The actors, that appear on the London theatres, have generally obtained some celebrity in provincial towns; but in these it was easily obtained; and, when they appear in London, they are not themselves at first acquainted with the species of character which they are best enabled to represent. It is sometimes the discovery of accident, but more generally of frequent experience.

From these premises, it must be evident that censure, if severely inflicted, must kill progressive merit; and that praise, if lavishly bestowed, may dangerously mislead and lull young performers to sleep. Scarcely any human being is so forgetful, of the mischief he may commit, as the man who calls himself a critic, when he takes up his pen, perhaps to encourage, perhaps to bestow as he imagines a severe flagellation. Praise and blame are necessary to the actor; but a chaste and conscientious rectitude are no less necessary to the critic.

The principal new performers, that have appeared during the present season, are Miss Duncan, Mr. Elliston, and Mr. Mathews; all at the Theatre Royal, Drury-lane. They have been seen sufficiently often to have obtained a certain degree of public favor; and, as remarks of the present kind are of little use except to the meridian of London, many of these remarks are not required.

The figure of Miss Duncan is highly to her advantage:

she is above the middle size, is finely formed, and well proportioned. Her face is such as a stage heroine might wish; for the features are marked, prominent, and capable of great variety. Her qualities for the stage have been carefully cultivated; for she sings, dances, and treads the stage, sufficiently well to display the accomplished young lady. Her voice is clear, and her articulation good; but they may both receive considerable improvement. She is deservedly in favor with the public; but she will no doubt remember that this favor can only be insured and increased, by an assiduous cultivation and increase of talent. Neither applause nor talents can remain stationary: they must increase, or decline. She will not, it may be hoped, be so unfortunate as to suppose herself already a perfect actress; for then public favor would gradually lessen till she might become one of those half and half performers who appear, and disappear, merely to fill up the routine. If she would peruse any one part, and, at every single period, or phrase, would put the precise questions—"how many different emotions does this period contain? and what variations of voice, manner, and look, are required?" she would sometimes find a vast difference between the answer and those emotions and varieties which she at present adopts, and perhaps understands. That she will acquire the habit of putting such important questions to herself there is every apparent reason to hope; and the gratifying reception, she has hitherto met, cannot but act as a high inducement to the delightful task.

Mr. Elliston, by having played so long and such a distinguished line of characters at Bath, has happily acquired a knowledge of the stage, which admits of little improvement. He is always at his ease, scarcely liable to be thrown off his guard, has a good articulation, a sonorous yet clear-toned voice, an agreeable middle-sized person, and a spirited manner; which manner may be called so voluble that it does not give a common spectator time to inquire for defects. The volubility, here meant, is not so much of utterance, as of utterance combined with gesture, agility, and change of demeanor. These qualities, by ensuring a certain share of success, have seduced

him into the error of never profoundly studying his author. To tragedy, this profound study is indispensable; but his spirit and ease, in comedy, frequently give the severest critic much satisfaction. In the present state of the stage, Mr. Elliston may be truly considered as a great acquisition: but, by a determined and persevering course of study, his talents may still be very highly improved.

Mr. Mathews is a young performer, and has not yet acquired that full possession of himself, and that firm confidence, which are absolutely necessary to the fine display of comic power. He should endeavour to acquire force, no less than variety; as well as the mode by which comic points come with their full impression upon an audience; yet not to depart from that chaste and simple style, which he at present very luckily appears to make his study. These qualities are by no means incompatible, as some performers have erroneously supposed them to be. Many living instances might be cited, to prove this assertion; and the late Mr. Weston possessed these opposite powers in so high a degree that Garrick, who had been many years famous in Abel Drugger, and Scrub, was so well convinced of Weston's superiority as to renounce such characters ever afterward, in Weston's favor. This at least is what I have very often heard repeated, while they were both living; and by those performers who, from their situation at Drury-lane Theatre, could scarcely have been mistaken. Mr. Mathews is sufficiently in favor with the public to encourage him to every exertion; and that he has a just ambition to distinguish himself he has given sufficient proof. His voice is scarcely loud enough, nor are his features sufficiently large, for the cast of characters in which he best succeeds: but the voice may be greatly improved, and even the features rendered much more pliable, and marking, by an assiduous course of well-planned study.

Actors unfortunately shew, by their practice, how continually they suppose that study (abstractedly, and almost wholly, the words which they are to repeat excepted) is a thing but little required of them: though by facts we are daily

taught that perfection is not to be attained, in any art, not even in that of the lowest mechanic, without unremitting perseverance of thought and practice combined. The actor should be intently studious of the peculiarities, caprices, and oddities, and of the manner in which they display themselves, wherever they can discover such qualities to exist, in any human being: and, perhaps, there is no human being in whom they do not exist. How vast the volume, then, which an actor has to study! These peculiarities are frequently observed, to a certain degree, and imitated, by actors, for the private diversion of themselves and friends. How strange it is that they do not oftener think in what manner the whims of an individual might be incorporated with, and form a prominent feature of, such a character, or such another, which they have publicly to personate. May the performers to whom the foregoing remarks relate make the study of their profession their highest enjoyment, their daily and luxurious banquet, till they are able to give a no less delightful feast to the public! May they remember it is really the banquet of pleasure; and the only banquet in which they can indulge without restraint, and free of all expence!

PIECES

FIRST PERFORMED IN DECEMBER 1804, AND JANUARY 1805.

THE LAND WE LIVE IN:

A COMEDY, IN FIVE ACTS, BY FRANCIS-LUDLOW HOLT, ESQ.

THE Comedy of "THE LAND WE LIVE IN" appeared, at Drury-lane, on the twenty-ninth of last December, and was only once performed. Few pieces have received a more severe condemnation, than this unfortunate comedy. It was unfortunate, because the opposition to it began before it could have been justly decided how far it might deserve the fate that befel it; and unfortunate, because it was too inveterately con-

demned, with scarcely a possible chance, had the latter part been the finest writing that poet had ever imagined, of being fairly heard. Perhaps, we must seek the origin of these misfortunes in the managers, proprietors, and authors themselves. The flagrant practice, at present, is such that, unless an audience, who may highly disapprove, proceed to an almost excess of acrimony in their condemnation, the piece they have condemned is again obtruded upon the town; and the daring assertion, "that it had been received with loud and universal applause," is read the next morning, and continued to be read, at the bottom of the play-bills, as long as means can be found to bolster up the ill-formed embrio. Let the gentlemen, who make those public assertions, settle the account how they can with their own rectitude and delicacy. To a tumultuous mode of condemnation, therefore, an audience is reduced; or, to the alternative of thus having their judgment revoked, and insulted. The gentleman who, being asked concerning the success of a new piece, replies it has completely failed, blushes to read it triumphantly announced the next morning, and to see the lie publicly posted to an opinion which was given, the night before, by every body present at the representation.

Mr. Holt has published his comedy, and by this means has enabled the public to judge of it, as a composition. It is to be hoped that he does not himself consider it as deserving to have appeared repeatedly before the public; for, should he continue in this mistake, it would probably lead him into similar errors in future. These would merit regret the more by his having proved, in the present instance, that he has a vigorous and manly style, is a man of acute remark, and is an attentive observer of those vices, and follies, to correct which is the duty of the comic muse.

The chief defect of "THE LAND WE LIVE IN" is a vacuity of plot and incident, such as should connect the various parts, so as to form unity and fulness of design. The attention of an audience cannot be kept alive, either by brilliant wit or broad satire, when it cannot be discovered to what they tend; and when no story is in the recollection, the end of which we are

desirous to hear. The feeble attempt at interest, which the author endeavoured to create, by introducing a husband divorced from his wife, he immediately destroyed, by informing the audience that this husband was become anxious to be again united to his wife; and the death-blow to all interest was still more securely given by the wife, when she expressed the same prompt alacrity. Perhaps he did not intend this to be the main plot of his piece, but that the interest should be excited by the marriage, which was to take place, between the daughter and son of two old friends. If so, it is certain no person could be interested for beings who were so wholly indifferent to each other; and who were so little worthy of entering the marriage state.

Having noticed this essential mistake, it would be unnecessary to proceed; except earnestly to hope that the author will hereafter be more attentive to his fable, and the public less inclined to give eager, hasty, and severe decisions.

THE SCHOOL OF REFORM; OR, HOW TO RULE A HUSBAND:

A COMEDY, IN FIVE ACTS, BY THOMAS MORTON, ESQ.

IT is peculiarly gratifying to an author, who has frequently received great and decisive testimonies of public favor, to meet with a similar reception at every new effort he makes; and this high gratification was received by Mr. Morton, on Tuesday, the 15th of January, when the above play was first represented. The piece Mr. Morton has last produced, like most of those which he formerly wrote, is a strong mixture of the serious and the pleasant: or might, perhaps, more emphatically be called a tragi-comedy. Voltaire, in his preface to 'The Prodigal Son,' *L'Enfant Prodigue*, has given an opinion more liberal than is customary with French critics, and which perhaps he would not have given had it not been applicable to his piece, which opinion ought to be generally adopted. Speaking of dramatic pieces, he says, "Were I required to pro-

nounce which species is the best, I should answer that which is the best executed." Were this rule made the test of merit, by critics, we should hear less of the unities, and more concerning the excellence or the failure of effect, and its causes.

There is indeed a unity which, when it is observed, never fails of receiving its due reward; and this may be either called the unity of action, or, more properly perhaps, the unity of story, or fable. When every scene and incident, throughout a dramatic piece, contribute to produce one effect, it must be very strange if that effect should be feeble. Should an audience be made to laugh and cry, at various passages of the same piece, this, instead of being a defect, cannot but justly be considered as effecting the best purposes of dramatic poetry, whose double province is the imagination and the passions of man.

These effects however should be produced by natural, and probable, and not by forced, incongruous, and impossible, events. When writing "The School of Reform," these simple means were not sufficiently present to the mind of the author: at least, he has failed in imagining and giving them a due arrangement. He has most judiciously been intent on producing the planned and double reform of his two heroes; but he has not scrupled to employ very romantic suppositions, for that purpose. A boy, brought up by the Philanthropic Society, saves the life of a lord; this lord is the father of the boy so brought up. The thing is not impossible, but it is an event which appertains to romance or novel writing. The lord, in gratitude, makes him his secretary: the lord's servants pretend to know him to be the son of a thief; and this too is rather strange. The youth openly avows himself to be such, which is still more strange, perhaps; but it is truly dignified and moral; and, while it decides his character, insures his favor with the public. The young hero delivers another gentleman from danger, by securing a highwayman, which highwayman proves to be his supposed father; and not only the supposed father of the youth, but the former and long lost dependent of Lord Avondale, formerly a farmer, and a tenant

to this Lord Avondale, but who, at that time, was only Mr. Radnor. The persons the youth had delivered were General Taragon, and his daughter, who had been affianced by the general to Lord Avondale. This daughter, however, and Frederick (the youth, her deliverer) fall inordinately in love with each other, at first sight. The highwayman, Robert Tyke, when brought to be examined, being instantly known to and knowing Lord Avondale, is abruptly acquitted of those felonious intentions which Frederick, the general, his daughter, and the servants, had all witnessed, and has an apartment assigned him, in the house of Lord Avondale, in which he appears to be entirely at his ease, and does not scruple to make use of his lordship's wardrobe, nor to tell an entire stranger that he has Lord Avondale under his thumb. The reason that Tyke, the highwayman, has this power over Lord Avondale is the grand secret, on which the plot hinges. This Lord, while he was plain Mr. Radnor, had privately married a beautiful young woman, who had accompanied him when he was appointed secretary to an ambassador abroad; to which embassy Mr. Radnor was afterward raised as the principal agent; and then, ambition seizing him, he caused his wife to be falsely accused, and shut up in a convent, after she had brought him an infant son. This infant son, Frederick, Mr. Radnor, afterward Lord Avondale, committed to the care of Robert Tyke, with a large sum of money, at the time that Robert Tyke was a remarkably industrious and honest farmer. Why the child was thus exposed is left to be imagined by the audience. Tyke became a dissipated, gaming, racing, profligate, and a criminal; and, being tried for his life, escaped with transportation. When aboard the ship, and about to sail, he relates the manner in which he saw his father die. Frederick had been put under the old man's care, who we afterward find came to life again; yet Frederick was exposed to poverty and want, though we do not clearly understand how that happened. However, the improvident Tyke, before he parted with the child, Frederick, marked his neck by gunpowder with an F.

Emily, the mother of Frederick, after having been confined

such a number of years, gets released from the convent, returns to England, brings all her certificates and papers, and arrives, by accident, in the very neighbourhood of his lordship, and obtains admission, either as a lodger or a friend, we do not well know how or why, at the house of Mr. Ferment. Lord Avondale gives his picture, not as he now is, but as he was when a youth, and only Mr. Radnor, to Frederick; and prevails on him, after some struggles on the part of the youth, to present it on Lord Avondale's part to Miss Taragon, who shows it to the injured Emily, and she at the first glance discovers in it the portrait of her husband; but, as it appears, is too ill to speak of her discovery. Miss Taragon presents a purse to Frederick, to bestow as he thinks proper: her reason for making this gift we do not comprehend, but it was necessary afterward for Frederick to have such a purse.

The father of Tyke is introduced, overcome with age, grief, and poverty; and the bailiffs are sent to his cottage, to seize his effects. Frederick gives the purse, and the debt is paid. Tyke enters, and discovers, after talking to him for some time, that his father is alive.

By the means of General Taragon and Mr. Ferment, Lord Avondale is informed that an inquiry is to be instituted, against the wretch who had deserted Emily. Conscious that it was himself, though they are ignorant of it, and dreadfully alarmed for his fame and fortune, he becomes anxious to devise any desperate means, by which he may obtain the certificates and papers of his wife, which are deposited at the house of Ferment. For this purpose, he provides a cloak and pistols, and has no doubt but that he can bribe Tyke to make a forcible entrance, and steal them. He is mistaken: Tyke, after finding his father, repents, and resolves never more to commit such crimes. His lordship then endeavours to seduce Frederick, but his attempts are equally vain; and, at last, seizing the cloak and pistols, Frederick being present, he desperately rushes out to perpetrate the act himself. Frederick, watching for him with the highest perturbation, at length hears a noise; a pistol is fired, and Lord Avondale returns,

after having seized the papers, expressing a hope that he had *killed* the man by whom he was pursued! His pistol had failed, the pursuers arrive, the doors are endeavoured to be forced, and he purposes to kill himself; but Frederick prevents him, seizes the pistols, puts on the cloak, persuades Avondale to retire, and personates the thief, in order to shelter his patron and friend.

Frederick is sent to prison, where he hears the bells ringing to celebrate the marriage between Lord Avondale and Miss Taragon, and therefore refuses to make his escape, though Tyke is come purposely to aid him. However, in their passionate debates, Frederick, being unbuttoned and his shirt open, Tyke discovers the F on his neck. Frederick is reconciled to life, finding Avondale to be his father. The jailor enters, who will not be bribed, but is so benevolent that he will let his prisoner escape. The meeting and explanation between father, wife, son, and lovers, take place, and all ends to our hearts' content.

This recapitulation I believe to be accurate; but, if my memory should have committed any mistake, it shall be publicly avowed, and I shall be heartily sorry for the blunder.

Should the reader imagine I have been thus minute purposely to prejudice him against the play, he will be greatly deceived. That these crowded and multifarious events, thus combined, are nearly impossible is true; and yet the play, on the whole, produced continual and strong effects on the passions, and was justly received with enthusiastic applause. There are two species of probability; the probability of events, and the probability of the passions and emotions of the human mind. In the first of these probabilities, Mr. Morton has been very defective; but to the last he has been delightfully true, and therefore deservedly triumphant. There are few plays in which the feelings, comic and tragic, have been more frequently or powerfully excited. He who should write a more regular piece, but with a heavy abatement of the pleasure which Mr. Morton has the art to give, might boast perhaps

that he had greater skill, but certainly could never pretend to equal genius.

In giving an account like this, the strictest attention ought to be paid to the justice which is due to the world, and the justice which is due to the author. By such conduct, the progress of good taste will be accelerated, and the principles of honor never injured.

It can scarcely be possible to remember the performance of this play, and not bestow the most heartfelt applause on the acting of Mr. Emery. This acting was so natural, so devoid in the serious parts of all stage sing-song and whine, so distant from the appearance of studied trick, so justly conceived, and so powerfully felt, that praise can scarcely be excessive. Of his comic excellence the town had received sufficient proof; but the wonder and delight that were expressed, at seeing him so capital a tragedian, gave a *haut gout*, an inestimable value, to the contrasted parts of the performance. Robert Tyke was the real hero of the piece, as well in the writing of it as in the representation.

The character of Lord Avondale does not give sufficient display to the great abilities of Mr. Cook, whose talents can scarcely be too much admired.

Mr. Lewis was as usual exceedingly pleasant, and did perhaps all that was possible with his part. I know not why the author, by his title, induced the audience to suppose that *how to rule a husband* was the subject of his play, while in reality it is only a slight, inefficient, and superfluous episode.

Mr. Charles Kemble gave great satisfaction in the part of Frederick, and is an attentive, studious, and improving young actor.

Mr. Munden can scarcely personate a character without making it pleasant: the picture he several times gave, of an old good-natured officer, who was willing at a moment's warning to cut any man's throat, was happily sketched; but the character itself is only an outline, which the author appears not to have had time to fill up.

Mr. Murray gave an agreeable portrait of a feeble good old man. The remainder of the men's characters were of little importance in respect to acting.

Of the principal woman's character, Mrs. Ferment, performed by Mrs. Litchfield, it has been whimsically observed, that her dumb method of ruling her husband was nothing more than the old recipe of sullenness: but Mr. and Mrs. Ferment do not appear to have produced so full an effect as had been preconceived.

Mrs. Gibbs made the little she had to say and do, in Emily, interesting. She is an actress of great feeling, and knowledge of stage effect; except that she has not sufficiently cultivated her voice, so as to render it clear, powerful, and penetrating.

Miss Brunton, and the other female characters, had still a less share in the business of the play: but the little there was to do seemed to be done with propriety.

Mr. Morton has declared himself the enemy of the German plays; yet he is eminently, and almost devotedly, a student in the German School. That there is a mixture of virtue and vice, in all men, is true; but virtue and vice ought not to be confounded: when servants, bailiffs, jailors, and all classes of people, are described as sentimental and generous, those precious qualities become too common; and the danger of being false to nature is imminent. When such people are really so, they should be given as exceptions, and drawn with force and at full length.

Mrs. Davenport, who made the housekeeper a very respectable old woman, had escaped my memory; as had likewise the strange discovery of Emily, at the altar, when Lord Avondale is leading up his bride to be married. How there came to be folding doors before an altar, and by what means the lady procured admittance to place herself in an attitude behind them, are among the inexplicable events before enumerated, which I must conclude with repeating that, though they injure, they do not destroy the sterling merit of the play.

The Epilogue was admirably spoken by Mrs. Lichfield, who appears to have no mean comic powers.

THE ART OF ACTING.

CHAP. II.

Action, *Tragic, Comic, and unimpassioned.*

ACTION is held to be so high a qualification that some have affirmed it to be the first, and almost the exclusive, art of an orator. This opinion is extravagant; but that appropriate action, on various occasions, produces unexpected and forcible effects is daily proved, as well by orators as by stage performers.

Severe investigation will perhaps demonstrate that the deportment of the orator, and his organs of speech, are equally under the guidance of the mind; that passion, whatever its nature may be, as well as comic humour, are never forcibly and adequately expressed but when the mind, at the moment of delivery, has a strong, powerful, and clear conception of the thoughts, and passions, which are personated; and that it can never accurately pourtray them, but when it is itself under this kind of enthusiastic impression. The rules therefore for action and intonation must be intrinsically the same.

All this appears to be true: but it likewise appears that the mind may partially conceive; and that, when it is either ignorant or inattentive, the organs of personification whether of action or of intonation are in a like proportion deficient. Every art must be studied in detail; and only as far as it is thoroughly understood, in its minute parts, can unity and perfection be the result. Different performers are found to be deficient in different ways, and degrees. The person, who would instruct, must not be too much afraid to speak of seeming trifles; or of being thought tedious: nor must the person, who is in need of instruction, complain of the labor and delay of reading, before he arrives at those rules of which he thinks himself most in want. Knowledge, like mountains, is composed of small and seemingly insignificant particles. The great misfortune is, in the students of this and all other arts, that, having overcome their first impediments, they imagine themselves to be in no

farther need of excellence, and treat advice as intrusive impertinence.

Action is either tragic, comic, or unimpassioned. The parts of which it is composed are, standing, walking, running, attitude, and gesture: for the proper conduct of all which it is necessary to understand the use and management of the eye, the arm, the hand, the knees, legs, and feet, and the proper deportment of the whole body.

To express the imperious and uncontrollable passions is the province of tragic action. It is never the intention of persons, who are under the dominion of passion, to make themselves the subject of laughter. There are many instances in which they produce this effect, unintentionally; but they belong to the ignoble passions, and are within the province of comic action, and comic personages: for the same passions, when felt by persons of a different character, become dignified, terrible, and destructive; and therefore cannot excite laughter. Avarice, which in some instances is highly comic, in others becomes the scourge and desolation of kingdoms. Many poets have well delineated the ridicule to which the jealous sometimes subject themselves; though few passions of a private kind have more frequently produced scenes of tragic horror.

The nature of tragic action, therefore, is energetic, daring, and impetuous, to excess. That which would be extravagant and ridiculous, in persons of equal and calm minds, is frequently an appropriate, necessary, and true expression of passion. The impassioned person may be remarkably reasonable, and sagacious, in some parts of his behaviour, the moment preceding an act of phrenzy.

Of this remarkable instances are afforded. In Paris, wretches, frantic and in the last paroxysm of despair, when about to dash themselves on the pavement, from garrets six or eight stories high, have on several occasions warned the passengers below to take care of themselves. A dreadful but a fine lesson this to actors; who, by the working of the features, their gesticulations, and their whole deportment, although they appear by the words they speak to be in the full possession of their un-

derstanding, may exhibit to the audience an inward convulsion of nature, that threatens and forebodes destruction.

In stage personification, nothing can more offend than the tame rant, and composed recollection, with which the crimes of passion are perpetrated. Instead of feeling and picturing the violent frantic and sudden emotions of passion, actors, with very few exceptions, are continually impressed with the wretched and ignorant persuasion that a long stride, a uniform swing of the arm, and a monotonous clamorous bellow, are the grand requisites of a tragedian. This persuasion is so strong in them, and they are so self-satisfied, that they appear for ages to have aped each other.

This they fully conclude is all that appertains to or can be achieved by tragic acting; and the spectator, or the critic, who should affirm there is a deficiency of knowledge and execution, in any one of them, would immediately be accused of an endeavour to deprive a meritorious individual, who lies at the mercy of the public, of the means of subsistence. It is true indeed that any spectator, or critic, who shall decry performers in general terms, and not point out their defects in any clear and distinct way, by which they may be understood and corrected, ought rather to be deemed cynical than serviceable. Against this kind of critic all public men have a just right to exclaim. Were such general criticism which does not discriminate reprobated, and held in contempt, the task of a critic would then become as respectable, and as beneficial, as it is too often at present nugatory, defamatory, and destructive of good taste.

It should be the first business of an actor deeply to investigate each character which he pretends to perform, and embue his whole soul with recollections never to be erased, of the number and the nature of the wild starts of passion, to which the character to be represented is subject: he should note them in his books, explain them to himself, and memorandum them immediately, and at that happy instant when he conceives them in their fullest force; should study all the various ways in which they show themselves, and in fact make himself a most

profound and masterly commentator on the passions, their consequences, and their marks, prognostics, and appearance. What a labour would it be thus to study no more than Macbeth, Hamlet, Lear, and Othello. Yet these characters, we daily find, every beardless stripling is eager to represent; and imagines he may fret and strut his hour upon the stage quite as well as another: neither is he, in general, very far from the truth.

Comic acting has likewise its fits and starts; but of totally a different nature: yet there is this grand similarity, that he alone can be successful who makes man his study. Excellent comic actors, however, are far more numerous than excellent tragedians; and the reason appears to be plain: men take a pleasure in observing the follies of others, which follies are almost continually before their eyes; while the exhibition of the tragic passions gives so much pain that it is shunned, if possible, and, to give peace to the mind, endeavoured to be buried in forgetfulness. Laughter can likewise be excited by oddity of action; such as may accompany almost any habit, or caprice of mind, without destroying but rather tending to give a zest to that habit, or caprice; therefore, though the follies of men are daily present to the eye, superficial observers have no knowledge of the particular gestures, attitudes, or demeanor, that are most usually found to appertain to each different class of humorists.

There are indeed some general rules, that cannot be mistaken: such as that age is feeble, has bent knees, a faltering voice, a curbed body, and a discontented countenance; but, the countenance excepted, these properties may as well belong to a man of the soundest understanding, and most rational demeanor, as to a man of the most eccentric habits.

Truly to class, and effectually to personify, the different gesticulations, attitudes, and modes of deportment, of the different species of humour, which generally prevail, the volume of nature must be industriously studied; and the labours of the comic performer will be no less than those of the tragedian, for they will both be endless.

Were this great task executed in any tolerable degree, comic actors would not be, what they almost all are, such mannerists that one of them cannot long be mistaken for another: they would so transform themselves, so embody each character, have such various modes of gesticulation, such change of demeanor, and be so entirely different each time from any thing that they had ever been before, that, speaking of spectators in general, the comedian would defy them to any certainty of guess as to the name and person of the performer, unless indeed some one actor should be so superior to all his companions, in this art of transformation, that he would always betray himself by his excellence.

What then should the duty of a comedian be? To note down, with a keen eye, the various gesticulations, and modes of deportment, of every individual in society; and to memorandum every turn of the face, every motion of the eye, and every posture of the body, with the turn of mind and occupation of the person to whom they belong.

Were they to carry their inquiries no further than to all the persons of whom they have some personal knowledge, and, having a character to perform, would adopt the deportment, gesticulation, grimace, look, and tone of voice, of a different individual for every different character, suiting each with each as their judgment should direct, how infinitely greater and more delightful would the variety be, than that uniformity which at present prevails.

Of unimpassioned action little need be said, more than will be found, hereafter, among the remarks on general deportment.

In the following chapters of this work, the detail of action will be considered, under its various heads. The intention, in what has been said, is to strongly impress the importance of this branch of study upon the mind of the actor; and to convince him, if possible, that should he neglect it, or treat it in a light and superficial manner, he never can arrive at perfection in his profession.

AN

ESSAY ON DRAMATIC COMPOSITION.

INTRODUCTION.

IT may be asked, why is this subject, on which so much already has been written, again intruded on the public? Have not *Aristotle*, *Quintilian*, *Horace*, and other ancient authors—have not *Boileau*, *Racine*, *Dacier*, and a multitude of French writers—have not a crowd of English critics, not forgetting the prefaces of the immortal *Dryden*, all treated this subject? Can laws and rules create a poet? or what is there now to be said that can be esteemed as new information?

It may be difficult to answer these questions satisfactorily: but it may truly be alleged, that rules are much more easily given than remembered; that, being the offspring of man, rules themselves are liable to be defective; that it is scarcely possible to say when inquiries into any subject ought to cease; that it is not novelty for which we ought to seek, but truth, so clearly stated and arranged, if possible, as not to be mistaken; and that therefore every new effort, to accomplish this desirable end, may rather deserve praise than blame.

There is still a farther reason for treating the subject anew; which is that there appear to be well-founded doubts, among men of liberal inquiry, whether the rules that have been so dogmatically given, and so long received as the standard by which perfection may be attained, be not in many respects so faulty as to be almost incapable of being observed, in the noblest efforts of the dramatic art. Attempts, therefore, to decide this point, will scarcely be considered as superfluous; and if any true criterion could be made public, by which good may clearly be distinguished from bad, a most desirable end would certainly be attained.

Of the Purposes for which Tragedies and Comedies are or ought to be composed.

In all the works of man, his present pleasure and his future happiness are consulted; and, in our best dramatic works, these purposes are combined: but too many of our inferior compositions seldom have any thing but present pleasure in view, and are so far defective in their construction. The pleasure, given by a dramatic work, scarcely can be exquisite, unless the future happiness of man be kept in view: that is to say, unless some essential moral truth, or truths, are inculcated. To the unprejudiced, it needs no effort of the understanding to demonstrate that this high purpose, in most if not all of our best dramatic writings, has been nobly effected. To the dreadful consequences of *envy, deceit, concupiscence, revenge, jealousy, ambition,* and all the frantic passions of the mind, no man can be insensible, or remain unwarned, who shall read *Venice Preserved, The Orphan, The Fair Penitent, Zanga, Measure for Measure, Macbeth, Lear, Othello,* and a multitude of those masterly works that exist, as well among the neighbouring nations as in the happy and highly cultivated English language. The first rule, therefore, that a dramatic poet has to observe is, that it is his duty to effect this double purpose, of giving present pleasure and promoting future happiness.

Of the different Species of Dramatic Writing.

Though tragedy and comedy appear to have formed the two grand classes of the dramatic art, it is nevertheless true that, among all modern nations at least, there have continually been other branches, which, though of the same tree, are distinct, in their nature and often in extent. To *mysteries, moralities, masques, intermedes,* and *interludes,* have succeeded *comic operas, farces, speaking pantomimes,* and particularly *plays,* or serious *dramas:* beside an innumerable progeny of *ballets, dumb pantomimes,* and *spectacles,* in many of which the eye and the ear are chiefly consulted. Into the nature and

end of these different classes it will be good to inquire, and, by inquiry, to endeavour to afford some light that may guide the adventurer, in paths which confusion and indecision have often darkened.

Of the Moral Nature of Tragedy.

Of all the works of man, it may be doubted whether there is any species of an equally impressive and dignified moral nature as tragedy. The epic poem might equal, if not surpass it, in the closet; but, as epic poems cannot be represented before multitudes, by whom from their nature they have little chance of being read, their moral influence must be greatly and inevitably less. Every thing that is noble, in the heart and actions of man, is the proper subject of tragic composition. All the dreadful errors into which his passions can lead him are there necessarily contrasted, with the purest emanations of his soul; the consequences of each are developed, and, while terror and compassion, at the portraits which it gives of vice, seize the heart, that heart is relieved, delighted, and embued, by the purity and dignity of virtue, as well as by its comparative and everlasting tendency to happiness. It is scarcely possible to compose tragedy, so as to be received and applauded by the public, without more or less producing this beneficial result.

Unless this can be denied, it follows that the duties of the tragic poet are among the most sacred which the human mind has conceived, and his rank and office of the highest nature*. It should however be added, the more unassuming he shows himself, in society, the better proof he gives of his poetic

* It is related of Piron, a French tragic and comic poet, that being one day conversing with a minister at his levee, a nobleman came in, and that the minister then invited them to his cabinet. Unacquainted with Piron, the nobleman bowed, and insisted on his going first. Piron returned the compliment, and the minister, turning round, said to the nobleman, "Pray take the lead, my Lord, Monsieur Piron is only a poet." On which Piron instantly stepped forward and exclaimed, "Since my rank is known, I will take my place."

dignity. True genius will neither affect hypocritical modesty, nor be debased by any symptoms of inflated pride.

Of the Moral Nature of Comedy.

There may perhaps be rational doubts entertained, whether the moral effects of comedy might not be greater even than those of tragedy; in which case, comedy would deserve the preference. Tragedy appears to be better calculated to exhibit the grandest efforts of virtue, as well as the most fatal effects of vice: but, in the present state of morals at least, these grand efforts and fatal effects are less familiar, not so often required or seen, nor so productive of general benefit, as the subordinate but diurnal morality, which it should be the province of comedy to teach. It is indeed true that, when the mind can be made to feel the higher virtues so impressively as that they can never be forgotten, it scarcely could be greatly erroneous in subordinate principles, and practice. Comedy, however, has a so much wider range, can insinuate precepts by such familiar and multifarious means, and enforce them so powerfully by satire and ridicule, that it might become a most incomparable engine, for the destruction of vice, if properly employed in dramatic poetry.

There is another point of comparison, which must not be overlooked. Of the different powers required for the tragic and the comic poet, it seems difficult to pronounce which are required to be the most numerous and the highest, supposing that, in each of them, perfect specimens were to be demanded: but, if we except SHAKSPEARE, the powers of the tragic poet, with respect to invention, variety, and knowledge of the human heart, seem generally to have been inferior to those of the comic. To both, this knowledge of the human heart is the source of power. It is true, there are a few tragedies, besides those of SHAKSPEARE, among which *Venice Preserved* is perhaps the first, which contain so fine a volume of this knowledge that the candid might be inclined to doubt which way they ought to decide: but, on a summary view, perhaps, including the whole works of SHAKSPEARE, and especially taking

Moliere into the account, we should say the comic muse has far outstripped her sister.

(To be continued.)

SOME ACCOUNT

OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE GERMAN STAGE.

(*Continued from No.* I. *p.* 71.)

TOWARD the year 1708, the harlequin of the Italians began to be introduced on the German stage; and was so thoroughly naturalized, by one Stranitzky, that, till the year 1730, neither tragedies nor comedies were performed, to the perfect satisfaction of the spectators, in which harlequin was not allowed to mingle his ridiculous and often indecent buffooneries.

We shall not mention a multitude of small companies of comedians, which were formed about that period, and who, till the year 1726, wandered from town to town in their poverty and barbarous state throughout Germany; but we shall be satisfied with relating an anecdote which was rather singular. One of these ambulatory troops had strayed into Sweden, and there performed the story of *Adam and Eve*. This drama made so great an impression, on the minds of the spectators, that, when they beheld Justice and Mercy personified, they fell on their knees before them.

The year 1727 became famous, by the first appearance of an actress, whom Germany may regard as the person who founded its theatre. This was Madame Neuber, the daughter of a doctor of laws of *Zittau*. She engaged herself to perform in the company of Spiegelberg, in which she soon became distinguished. Tragedy was preferred by her; and it may be said, in her praise, that she was the first who taught the actresses of Germany the true tone of declamation. She afterward obtained a privilege from the Elector of Saxony, and

undertook to reform the theatre. With this intent, she drew together the best actors; among whom there soon appeared several, who deserved to be distinguished in the history of the German theatre. One of the first was the famous KOCH, who, after having been five and twenty years the manager of one of the best companies in Germany, died at Berlin, January 3, 1775, bearing to the grave the reputation of a celebrated actor, and the still more glorious title of a truly honest man.

In 1727, GOTTSCHED likewise appeared, who was a professor of philosophy, at the university of LEIPSIC: a man of much erudition, pedantic, and vain, but without genius. He perceived the lamentable state in which the German language then was; despised by the great, who only understood French, and neglected by the learned, who preferred the Latin. He determined to do honor to his mother tongue, and to become the reformer of German literature. To effect this purpose he devoted himself. Though his talents and merit in general did not surpass mediocrity, he cannot be justly refused the glory of having planned a route for the guidance of those men of genius whose works have consigned his name to oblivion.

The arrival of MADAME NEUBER, at Leipsic, he considered as highly favorable to his design; while the title of Creator of the German Theatre flattered his vanity, and induced him to obtain it by the merit of industry. He assumed a high tone, and drew the attention of the Germans, not to the beauties of foreign works, but, to the mechanism and rules according to which they were composed. Himself and his wife gave a number of very defective translations, and prevailed on MADAME NEUBER to have them performed. In this manner, he effectually gave a new form to the German theatre; but he retarded its progress.

The first piece performed by MADAME NEUBER, who followed the advice of GOTTSCHED, was a translation of the *Regulus* of PRADON. Though the style was wretched, the piece was well received; which success was due to the pomp with which it was performed. From this period, 1727, to 1739, there was a succession of *The Cid, Brutus, Alexandre, Cinna, Iphigenie, Be-*

rénice, Les Horaces, Brittanicus, Le Comte d'Essex, Polieucte, Alzire, and a number of foreign chefs-d'œuvres, the translations of which were scarcely supportable. In the year 1731, the first original production of GOTTSCHED appeared, called Cato Dying; a pitiful tragedy, ill versified, and consisting of a strange assemblage of English and French scenes. It was applauded however with transport, because the reputation of the author at that time was high; but it was applause that soon died away: taste became more refined; men of genius resorted to ancient and foreign sources, and obtained distinction by real excellence. The tragedy of GOTTSCHED was then reduced to its just value; that is, it was placed much below mediocrity.

The year 1737 was made remarkable by the banishment of Harlequin, whose reign till then had been triumphant. GOTTSCHED, who from ignorance confounded his copy with the true Italian Harlequin, chose rather to banish them both, without mercy, than to give more delicacy to this character, and thus prepare the nation for good comedy. Harlequin was afterward avenged for this affront: Counsellor MOESER undertook his defence, in a treatise entitled, *Harlekin; oder die Vertheidigung des groteske komischen*:* a work which alone announced more taste, and knowledge of the theatre, than all the writings of GOTTSCHED.

The defeat of Harlequin was the last triumph of this dictator of literature. The deceitful charm, by which he had fascinated the mind, suddenly disappeared; and his disputes with MADAME NEUBER gave the first wound to his fame. He would force her to perform a bad translation of ALZIRE, made by his wife, in preference to another, that was much superior, and that had already appeared with success. Equally considering themselves as the creators of the German theatre, equally inflated with their individual merit, and persuaded that their fame was now at stake, they made open war on each other. GOTTSCHED wrote bitter criticisms on all the pieces that

* Harlequin; or an Apology for Grotesque Comedy.

Madame Neuber presented to the public; but he had unfortunately given his enemies too much advantage, for the laugh not to be on their side.

At this time, in order to support his staggering fame, Gottsched determined to lay his dramatic works before the public; and they were printed in six volumes, which fortunately are now forgotten. Among them was a number of translations, from the French; such as *Iphigenie, Cornélie, Le Tambour Nocturne**, *Zaire, Alzire, Le Dissipateur, Les Horaces, Le Misanthrope, Le Cid;* all wretchedly versified, by Gottsched and his spouse. This collection only contains two or three original pieces, that still deserve to be read; and they were not by Gottsched.

In 1739, the first tragic author that Germany possessed appeared; who doubtless would have contributed to the perfection of the theatre, if death had not too suddenly cut short his career. His name was John Elias *Schlegel*. He had not finished his studies when, in imitation of Euripides, he wrote his tragedy of Iphigenia in Taurica; which was represented at Leipsic in 1739, and which, amid many feeble parts of a first attempt, announced the true genius of a tragic poet.

This year was likewise remarkable by the misfortune of Madame Neuber, who did not long enjoy the pleasure of having triumphed over Gottsched: it was occasioned by an invitation she received to go to Russia, and which she very imprudently accepted. Two years after her arrival there, the Duke of Biron, her protector, was disgraced, and she was obliged to return to Germany; where, when she arrived, she found a new company formed, during her absence, under the management of *Schoenemann*. This company became famous by the performers that composed it, many of whom are still alive.

The actor among them, who merits first to be named, was the famous Eckhof, the Roscius of Germany. This sublime

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* Which is itself a translation of Addison's Drummer, or The Haunted House.

and inimitable actor was born at Hamburg, in 1720, and appeared first at Luneburg, in 1740: superior talents, added to severe study, soon made him the first actor of Germany; and his excellence was equal in tragedy and comedy. He died the 16th of June, 1778. Melpomene still deplores her three favorite sons; GARRICK, LE KAIN, and ECKHOF; who all died in the same year *.

DRAMATIC ANECDOTES.

AMONG foreign nations, particularly the French, a mode of criticising new pieces is adopted, which, when it is restrained within the bounds of decency, is highly advantageous to good taste and the progress of the dramatic art. When a new piece meets with success, at one theatre, a parody upon that piece has frequently appeared, at another; or critical speeches have been put into the mouths of the performers of such old pieces as would admit of the interlopation. A tragedy, called *Gustave Vasa*, written by the famous Piron, was performed in 1733; and the comedians of the Italian theatre soon produced a criticism, in verse, to the following effect; which, as it cannot but singularly remind us of the style of composition adopted by our own poets of the present day, will probably amuse the reader.

" When a hero shall arise from the bosom of the North, his
" refulgent light will efface all others: the great Gustavus
" will astonish by his beauties, and even by his defects; all in
" him will delight, even to his dress. Ye Gods! What a rich
" abundance of improbabilities, of common-place sentiments,
" happily linked, of incidents such as have never been beheld!
" A dream, a rencounter, monologues more than enough, a long
" funeral oration to celebrate a living prince, disguises, con-
" spiracies, imprisonments, and proscriptions. A sedition, by

* That is, in 1782.

" which all is suddenly changed; an elopement, a flight, a " combat on the ice, where, like a diver and by a happy pro- " digy, the daughter of Stenon sinks and disappears, full dress- " ed, then returns to light and day, her clothes all very dry, " to inform us how it happened; and, by a last event wor- " thy of being vaunted, after so many perils, fracas, and furious " affairs, by which the agitated public are held in suspense, " the piece finishes very peaceably; and, one poor dying confi- " dent excepted, the actors all retire safe and in good health."

Piron, discontented with the performance of Sarrasin in the above tragedy, and knowing that actor had been an Abbé in his youth, called aloud from the amphitheatre—" That man, " who was not worthy of being consecrated at twenty-four, is " equally unworthy of being excommunicated at sixty." All actors in France used to be excommunicated. Sarrasin however is said to have been an excellent comedian.

At the performance of this Gustavus, the Abbé Desfontaines met Piron much too richly dressed, as he supposed; and, coming up to him, said—' Poor Piron! Really, that dress is ill ' adapted to you!' " That may be," answered Piron; " but, " really, in return, Mr. Abbé, you must allow you are as ill " adapted to your own." The Abbé wore the clerical habit.

When the art of poetry by *Dacier* first appeared, an author, named *De Brie*, read nothing else: his contempt for *Corneille* became excessive, *Racine* was but little more in favor, and he despised the French exceedingly, for having admired both these poets. " We have not a single good tragedy," exclaimed he; and determined out of pure compassion to write one. The subject he chose was the *Heraclides*, in which all was measured by line and rule, in full deference to the remarks of *Dacier*. This regular and scientific piece was only played once.

The same author wrote a comedy, of one act, entitled *Le Lourdaut*, which was little more successful. These two pieces gave occasion to the following epigram, by *Jean Baptist Rousseau:*

Pour disculper ses Oeuvres insipides,
De Brie accuse et le froid et le chaud;
Le froid, dit il, fit chéoir mes Héraclides;
Et la chaleur fit tomber mon Lourdaut:
Mais le Public, qui n'est point en défaut,
Et dont le sens s'accorde avec le nôtre,
Dit à cela—Taisez vous, grand Nigaud;
C'est le froid seul qui fit chéoir l'une et l'autre.

Weeping his children, poor De Brie has told
How both have perish'd, or by heat, or cold:
Frozen my poor Heraclides lies dead!
Lourdaut expir'd by fever in the head!
The public, hating ignorance and sloth,
Cries silence, fool! the cold has kill'd them both.

After the appearance of the *Abderites,* a comedy of one act, performed in 1732, written by the academician *Moncrif,* a critic, addressing himself to the author, says—"The comedies "of *Molière* made us laugh; and we cry at those of *La* "*Chaussée:* but we neither laugh nor cry at your Abderites. "Like *Theognes,* called by the Athenians the poet of snow, "you keep us in perfect apathy, without exciting the least "emotion either of grief of joy.

At the performance of *Abdilly,* in 1729, a tragi-comedy by *Madame Riccoboni,* the pit called aloud to an Abbé, who was in front—"Down, Mr. Abbé, down!" The Abbé took no notice at first; but, as the cries increased, he turned and addressed the rioters, saying—'Gentlemen, having already been 'robbed of my gold watch in your company, I would rather 'quit the theatre than risk my snuff-box.' The cries were immediately changed to applause, and the Abbé kept his place.

The famous *Favart,* during his dramatic labors, wrote a comic opera, in one act, entitled *Acajou,* the subject of which he took from a tale by *Duclos.* It was first played, at the fair of *St. Germain,* in 1744; but a prohibition afterward appeared, by which the actors of the comic opera were not suffered to speak, and at the following fair this opera was re-written all in *Vaudevilles.* In the month of October in the same year, it was performed with great satisfaction on the theatre of *L'Académie*

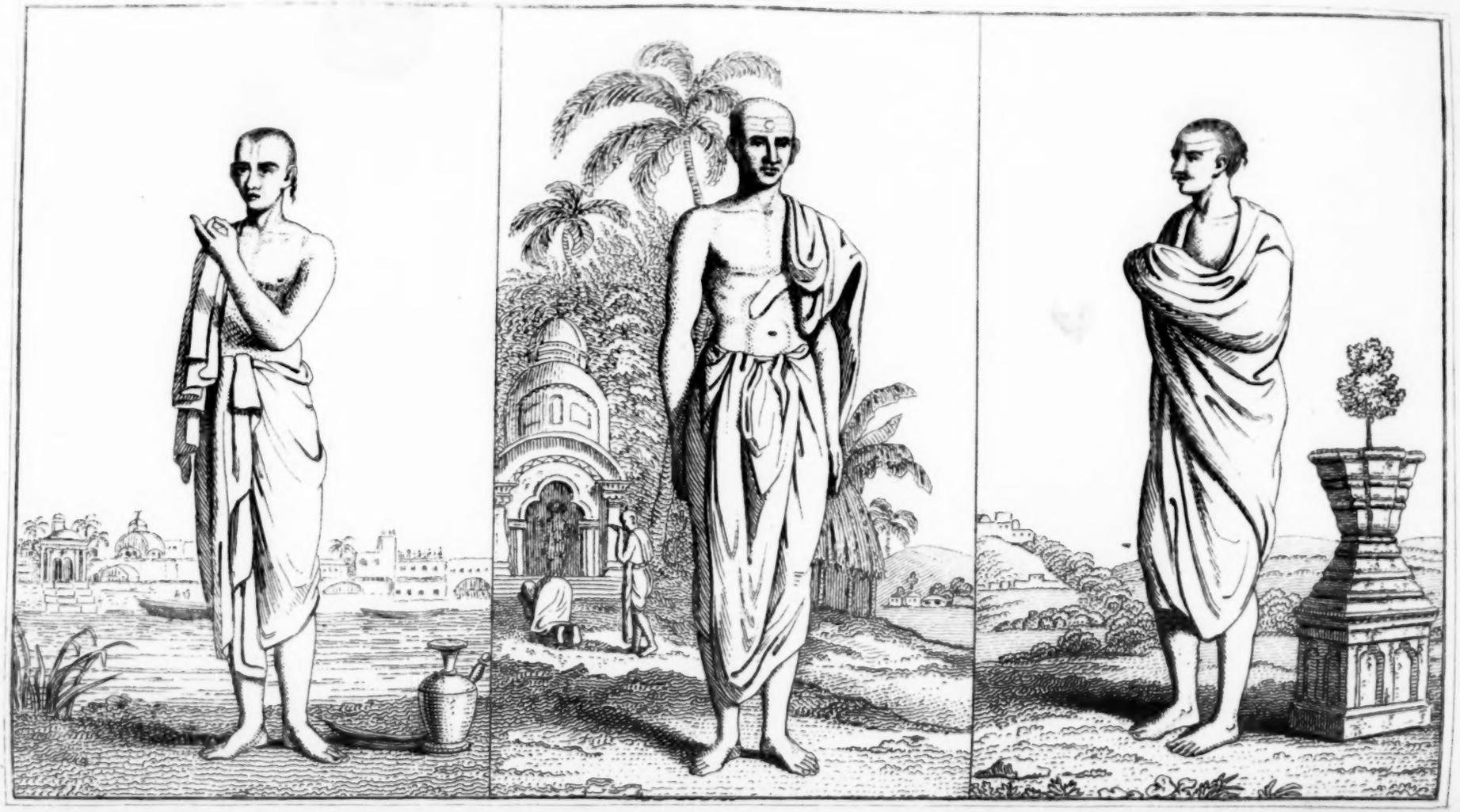
Royale de Musique. It then became so popular that, on the evening when the theatre was to close, the barrier which separated the orchestra and the pit was broken. Endeavours were made to repair it, but in vain: while one part of the spectators were made to give way another rushed forward, and in the confusion it was not possible to give their money back to those who had been obliged to leave the theatre. Several demanded it with threats, and six of the most mutinous were arrested. *M. Monet* conducted himself, on that occasion, with much prudence: he caused those who had been sent to the guard-house to be released, and paid the discontented by a harangue, partly pleasant partly pathetic, which appeased every body. It is said there never was so lucrative a performance. Every person paid six livres [five shillings] and the stage itself was so full that there was only room for one actor at a time. There was neither symphony nor dance, nor could any thing be heard, not even the actor who came to return thanks: yet all was applauded, and every body satisfied; most especially the manager.

A person, named *Cadoret*, known by the anagram *Terodac*, was so perfect a mimic that the authors imagined they really saw and heard the actors, whom he parodied. In his part of *Métromane*, he so finely caricatured the actors of that time that this was an additional reason for forbidding the actors of the comic opera to speak, and confining them to song. It was imagined that, by this means, the scene of *Métromane*, which so highly offended the actors who were imitated, would have been suppressed. But the author here found little difficulty; for, as the comedians then, as they do at present, rather sang than spoke, the author set their declamation to music; and the notes so nearly agreed, with the inflexions and rant of the tragic actors, that the difference was scarcely perceptible. Thus, instead of injuring the comic opera, its success was increased.

MISCELLANIES.

THE dress of Miss Duncan, in Charlotte Rusport, exemplifies the principles of true taste: it is not encumbered by false orna-

Dress of Miss Duncan, in the West Indian.



1. A Srotery Brahmun. 2. A Drawer Brahmun. 3. A Kanoge Brahmun.

ment, but is flowing and elegant, yet simple, as displayed in the coloured print at the beginning of this number.

Purchasers and students of Costume, it is presumed, will be satisfied with the change adopted, of giving three plain specimens, instead of one coloured: the subject is so voluminous that little progress could be made, by a single figure monthly. The subject of Indian Costume cannot but interest the stage, where the scene is so frequently laid in India. The work, from which the examples are given, has been noticed in No. 1. The author of that work says of it, in his preface—"It will serve to "illustrate the character, customs, manners, persons, and dresses "of the inhabitants of Indostan—their implements of husbandry, "manufacture, and war—their modes of conveyance, by land "and water—their religious sectaries, and the appearance of "their country." All this cannot be effected on the small and cheap scale of the present work, but while exemplifying costume the back-ground (as in this number and the last) of the scenery, as given in the grand folio from which they are taken, may afford instruction. Of the three figures here engraved that work contains the following description.

"*A Srotery* Brahmun of Bengalee, with the *Garrah*, and the *Cossa*, or *Agrah;* utensils used by them in their offerings. The Srotery possesses seven gooms, or sciences; the Koolen nine."

"The *Kanoge* Brahmun. The shrub represented is the *Tulsee*, held in great veneration by the Brahmuns."

"A *Drawer* Brahmun; the back-ground shews the manner of prostrating themselves in their *Munders*, or *Pagodas*."

Indian Costume will be continued so as to afford full information on the dress of the people, Gentoos and Mahomedans.

MONTHLY LIST, FOR JANUARY, 1805.

DRURY-LANE.

DEC.
31. She Stoops to Conquer - - - - - Old Harlequin's Fire Side, and Richard Cœur de Lion.

JAN. 1805.
1. The Mountaineers - - - - - - - Ditto, and The Citizen.
2. The Wonder - - - - - - - - - Ditto, and Doctor and Apothecary.
3. The Stranger - - - - - - - - - Ditto, and The Irishman in London.
4. The West Indian - - - - - - - Matrimony, and Old Harlequin's Fire Side.
5. The Soldier's Daughter - - - - - Old Harlequin's Fire Side, and Prize.
7. Pizarro - - - - - - - - - - - Ditto, and Fortune's Frolic.
8. The Suspicious Husband - - - - Ditto, and No Song No Supper.

9. The West Indian - - - - - - - - - Ditto, and A House to be Sold.
10. Hamlet - - - - - - - (2d time) A new Allegorical Dance The United Britons, and Spoil'd Child.
11. The Belles' Stratagem - - - - - Old Harlequin's Fire Side, and Of Age To-morrow.
12. The Suspicious Husband - - - - The United Britons, and Deserter.
14. The West Indian - - - - - - - - The Mock Doctor, and Old Harlequin's Fire Side.
15. The Beggar's Opera - - - - - - The United Britons, and The Citizen.
16. The Marriage Promise - - - - - Who's the Dupe? and Old Harlequin's Fire Side.
17. The Provoked Husband - - - - The United Britons, and The Irishman in London.
18. The Rivals - - - - - - - - - - - Two Strings to your Bow, and Old Harlequin's Fire Side.
19. She Stoops to Conquer - - - - - The United Britons, and The Liar.
21. The West Indian - - - - - - - - The Apprentice, and Old Harlequin's Fire Side.
22. The Mountaineers - - - - - - - The United Britons, and Anatomist.
23. As You Like It - - - - - - - - - The Humourist, and Old Harlequin's Fire Side.
24. The Clandestine Marriage - - - The United Britons, and The Citizen.
25. The School for Scandal - - - - - Of Age To-morrow, and Old Harlequin's Fire Side.
26. The Jew - - - - - - - - - - - - Old Harlequin's Fire Side, and Richard Cœur de Lion.

COVENT-GARDEN.

DEC.
31. Richard III. - - - - - - - - - - Harlequin Quicksilver.

JAN. 1805.
1. John Bull - - - - - - - - - - - Ditto.
2. The Man of the World - - - - - Ditto.
3. The Heir at Law - - - - - - - - Ditto.
4. The Blind Bargain - - - - - - - Ditto.
5. The Cabinet - - - - - - - - - - Ditto.
7. Romeo and Juliet - - - - - - - - Ditto.
8. The English Fleet - - - - - - - Ditto.
9. The Cabinet - - - - - - - - - - Ditto.
10. Thirty Thousand - - - - - - - - Ditto.
11. The Man of the World - - - - Ditto.
12. The English Fleet - - - - - - - Ditto.
14. The Poor Gentleman (by Com.) Ditto.
15. The School of Reform - - - - - Ditto.
16. Ditto - - - - - - - - - - - - - Ditto.
17. Ditto - - - - - - - - - - - - - Ditto.
18. Ditto - - - - - - - - - - - - - Ditto.
19. Ditto - - - - - - - - - - - - - Ditto.
21. Ditto - - - - - - - - - - - - - Ditto.
22. Ditto - - - - - - - - - - - - - Ditto.
23. Ditto (by Command) - - - - - - The Paragraph.
24. Ditto - - - - - - - - - - - - - Harlequin Quicksilver.
25. Ditto - - - - - - - - - - - - - Ditto.
26. Ditto - - - - - - - - - - - - - Ditto.

A fine Head of ALFIERI, *after a print by* Morghen, *beautifully embellished by* H. THOMPSON, R. A. *and engraved by* Messrs. Cooke, *will be given with* No. III.